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(54) **COMPUTERIZED APPARATUS FOR
TRANSFER BETWEEN LOCATIONS**

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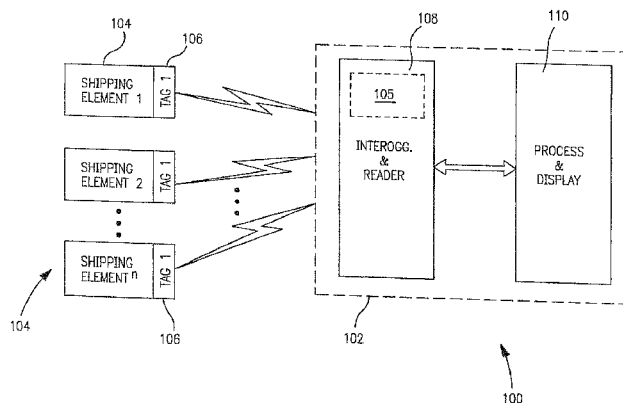
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A computerized apparatus useful for causing transfer of items
(tangible or otherwise) from at least one location to another.
In one embodiment, the apparatus is a portable user-operated
apparatus having at least one input device enabled to receive
input identifying the item(s) to be transferred, and a wireless
interface to interface with a nearby computer system (e.g.,
desktop computer, kiosk, or other device) to cause the com-
puter system to invoke the transfer via a remote entity. In one
variant, the transfer involves inputting barcode data via the
portable device, and resultant shipment of consumable items
to the user's location. In another variant, the transfer is an
electronic transfer of a data structure such as an MP3 music
file.

131 Claims, 6 Drawing Sheets



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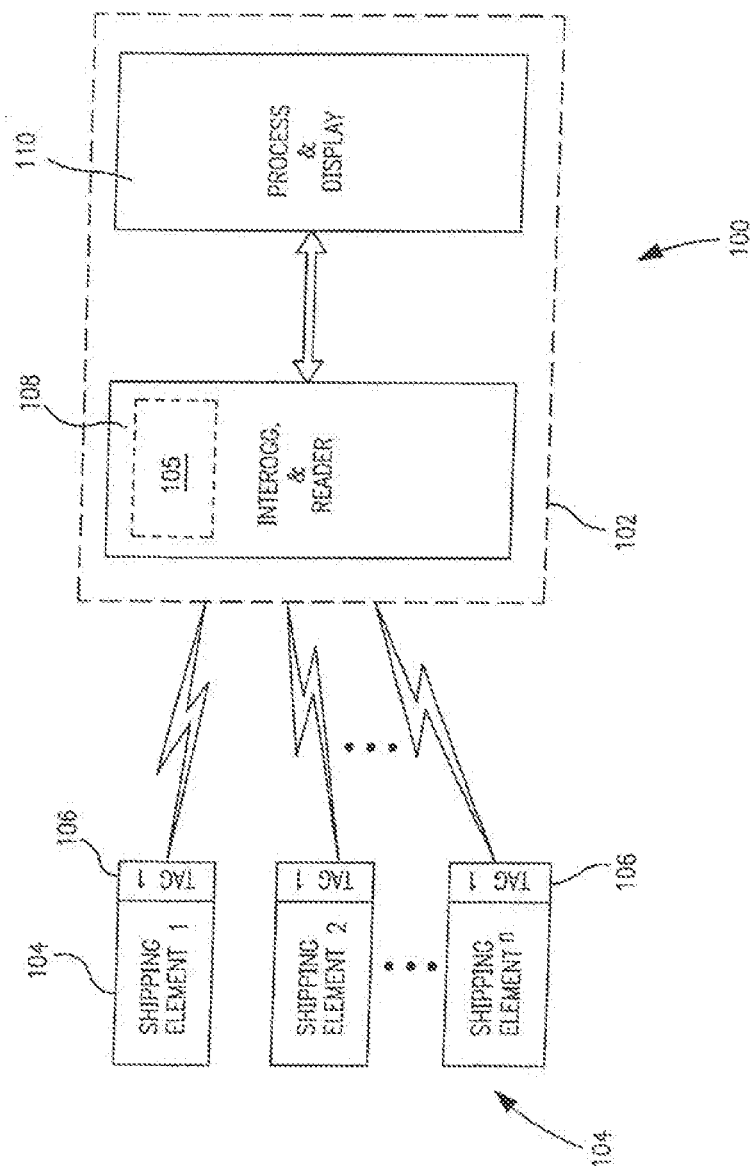


FIG. 1

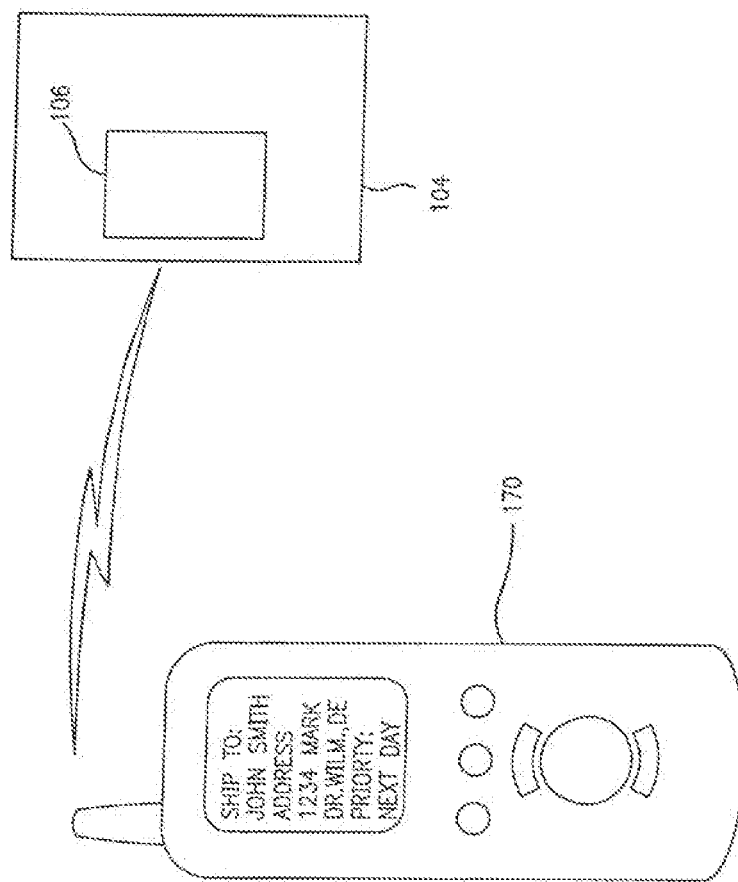
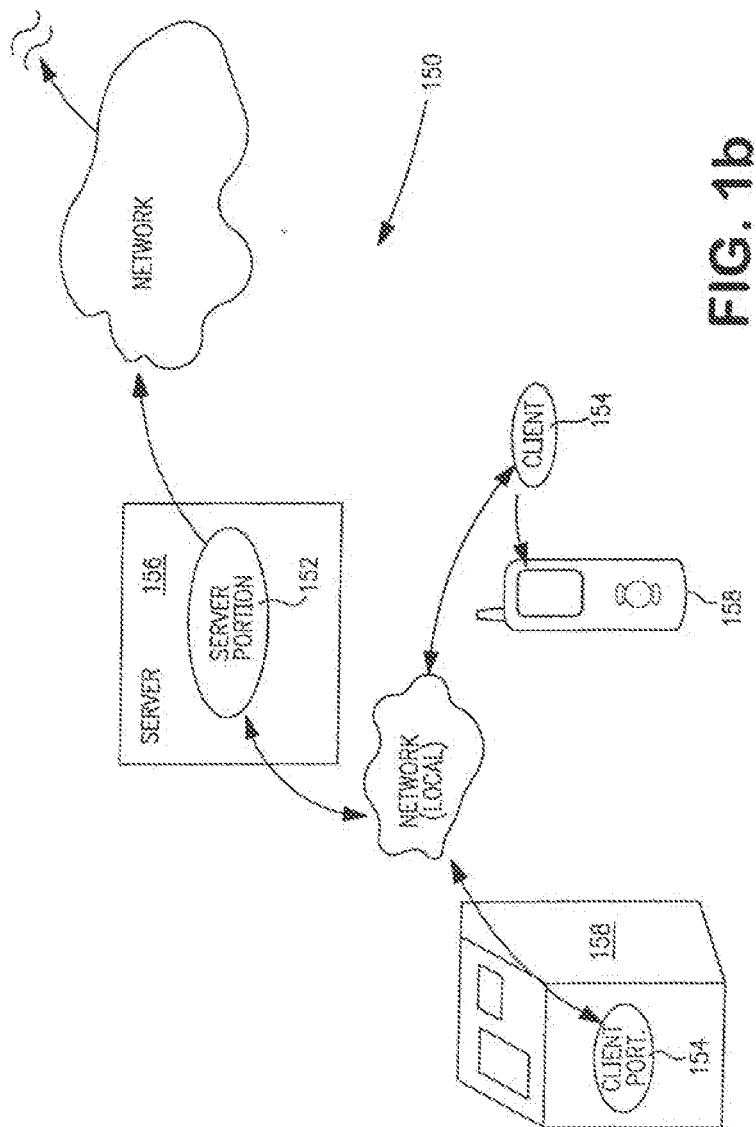


FIG. 1a



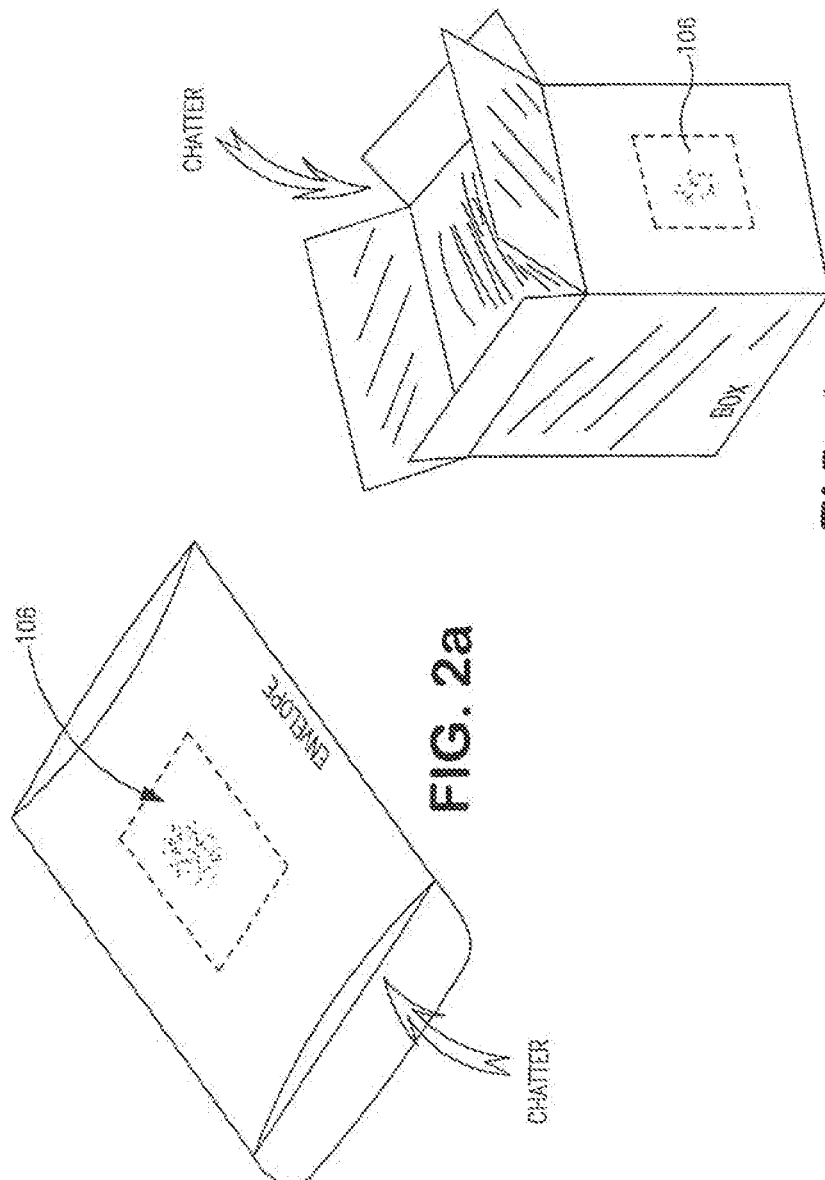


FIG. 2a

FIG. 2b

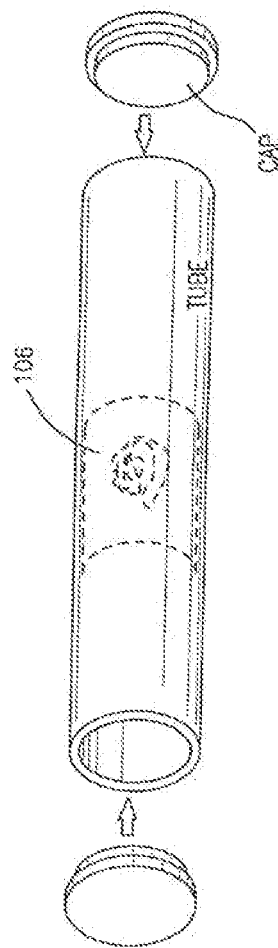
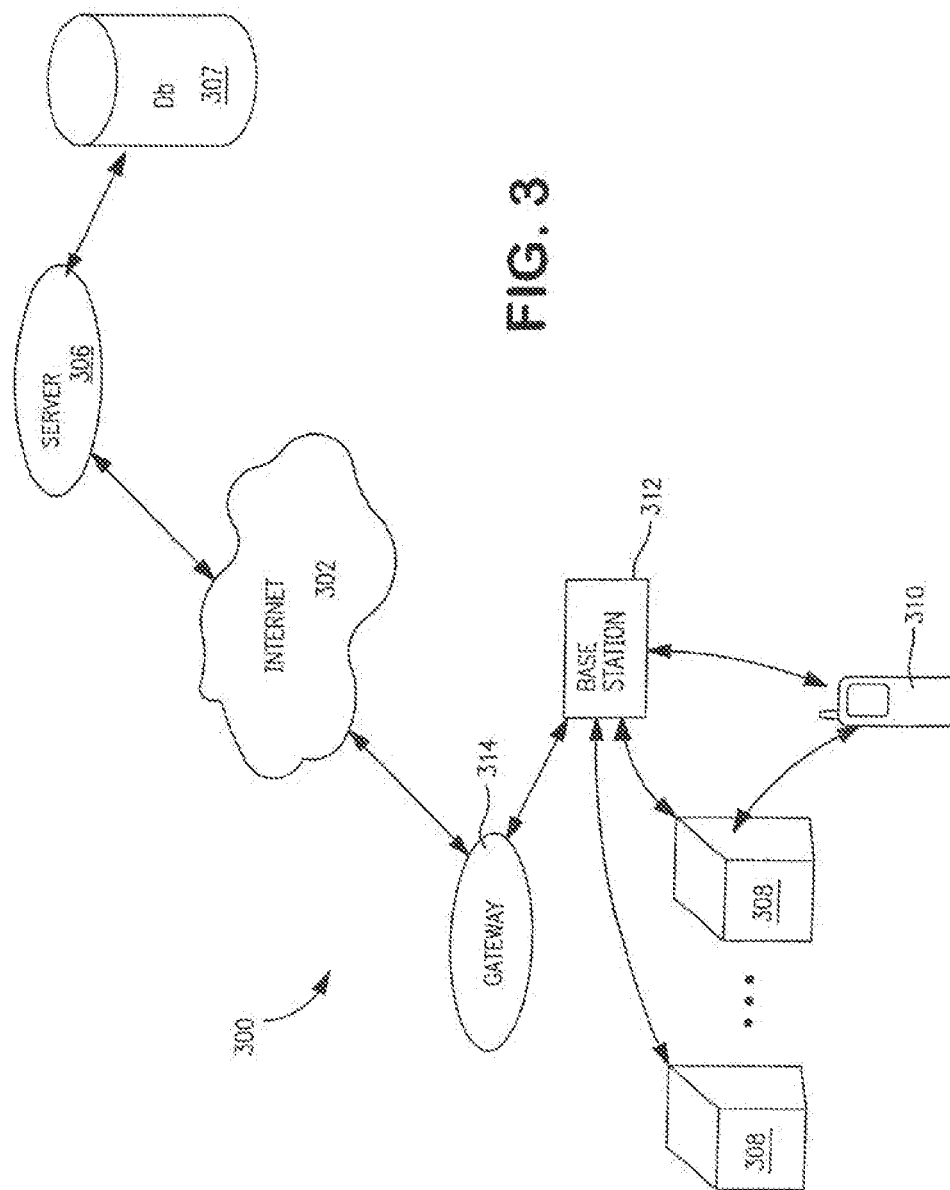


FIG. 2c



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**COMPUTERIZED APPARATUS FOR
TRANSFER BETWEEN LOCATIONS****PRIORITY**

This application is a divisional of and claims priority to and U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/761,077 filed Feb. 6, 2013 entitled "PORTABLE COMPUTERIZED WIRELESS APPARATUS", now U.S. Pat. No. 9,033,226, which is a continuation of and claims priority to U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/604,511 filed Sep. 5, 2012 entitled "PORTABLE COMPUTERIZED WIRELESS INFORMATION APPARATUS AND METHODS", now U.S. Pat. No. 8,413,887, which is a continuation of and claims priority to U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/421,713 filed Mar. 15, 2012 and entitled "PORTABLE COMPUTERIZED WIRELESS PAYMENT APPARATUS AND METHODS", now U.S. Pat. No. 8,371,503, which is a continuation of and claims priority to co-owned and co-pending U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/284,492 filed Sep. 22, 2008 entitled "CHATTEL MANAGEMENT APPARATUS AND METHODS", now U.S. Pat. No. 8,205,788, which is a continuation of and claims priority to U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/015,384 filed Dec. 16, 2004 and entitled "CHATTEL MANAGEMENT APPARATUS AND METHODS", now U.S. Pat. No. 7,427,024, which claims priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/530,812 entitled POINT-OF-DEPARTURE CHATTEL MANAGEMENT APPARATUS AND METHODS filed Dec. 17, 2003, each of the foregoing incorporated herein by reference in its entirety. This application is also related to co-owned U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/727,306 filed Dec. 26, 2012 and entitled "COMPUTERIZED WIRELESS PAYMENT METHODS", now U.S. Pat. No. 8,613,390; Ser. No. 13/733,102 filed on Jan. 2, 2013 and entitled "COMPUTERIZED INFORMATION AND DISPLAY APPARATUS", now U.S. Pat. No. 8,690,050; Ser. No. 13/733,106 filed Jan. 2, 2013 and entitled "PORTABLE COMPUTERIZED WIRELESS PAYMENT APPARATUS AND METHODS", now U.S. Pat. No. 8,579,189; Ser. No. 13/738,671 filed Jan. 10, 2013 and entitled "PORTABLE COMPUTERIZED WIRELESS PAYMENT APPARATUS AND METHODS", now U.S. Pat. No. 8,622,286; Ser. No. 13/756,984 filed Feb. 1, 2013 and entitled "PORTABLE COMPUTERIZED WIRELESS PAYMENT APPARATUS AND METHODS", now U.S. Pat. No. 8,640,944; Ser. No. 14/606,959 filed Jan. 27, 2015 and entitled "PORTABLE COMPUTERIZED WIRELESS APPARATUS", Ser. No. 14/610,946 filed Jan. 30, 2015 and entitled "METHODS OF TRANSPORT OF ONE OR MORE ITEMS BETWEEN LOCATIONS", Ser. No. 14/674,929 filed Mar. 31, 2015 and entitled "USER WEARABLE WIRELESS ENABLED ELECTRONIC APPARATUS", Ser. No. 14/610,946 filed Jan. 30, 2015 and entitled "METHODS OF TRANSPORT OF ONE OR MORE ITEMS BETWEEN LOCATIONS", Ser. No. 14/642,594 filed Mar. 9, 2015 and entitled "COMPUTERIZED APPARATUS AND METHODS FOR TRANSFER BETWEEN LOCATIONS" and Ser. No. 14/645,235 filed Mar. 11, 2015 and entitled "METHODS FOR SHIPPING ELEMENT PROCESSING", each also incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to improved methods and apparatus for the management, tracking and recovery of chattel at e.g., transportation facilities such as airports.

DESCRIPTION OF RELATED TECHNOLOGY

With the heightened level of security at airports and other facilities where large numbers of people gather, many pas-

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sengers have personal or other items ("chattel"), such as pocket knives, tools, large belt buckles, wireless devices, personal security devices, etc., that are subject to confiscation by security personnel at the security checkpoint before proceeding further. Hence, the passengers or patrons are given the choice of either surrendering the items to the security personnel, or attempting to find some other mechanism for their safekeeping. Accordingly, airports and the like collect literally tons of such personal items each year since many people choose simply to surrender their items rather than having their progress impeded.

A number of different approaches to chattel (and baggage) tracking and management are present under the prior art. For example, United States Patent Publication No 20020163443 to Stewart, et al. published Nov. 7, 2002 entitled "Airport valet communication system" discloses an improved airport valet communication system. The system attaches a vehicle tag to a vehicle. A stall tag is also provided and is placed somewhere within the vicinity of a parking stall. To communicate with these two tags, a handheld computer is provided by the system for communicating with the vehicle tag via radio frequency communication to obtain an identification of the vehicle and for communicating with the stall tag via radio frequency communication to obtain an identification of the parking stall so as to correlate the vehicle and the parking stall in which the vehicle is parked.

United States Patent Publication No. 20030189094 to Trautz, published Oct. 9, 2003 entitled "Baggage tracking system" discloses a passenger and baggage reconciliation system that employs non-programmable, passive transponder, radio frequency identification (RFID) tags attached to checked baggage, which enables continuity of reconciliation through any number of intra-air transfer points until the destination of the air travel is reached. If separation of the passenger and baggage occurs prior to the planned air travel destination, the system furnishes prompt notification to the airline. While enrollment of the passenger occurs upon payment for travel, checked baggage enrollment can occur variously outside the airport building (curbside), at the ticket counter, at the departure gate, on board the airplane, or along side the airplane prior to mounting the stairway or on the jet bridge. The interface to the airline carrier's computer reservation system (CRS) to obtain passenger and schedule data permits continuous tracking of passengers and baggage for the reconciliation process. The CRS creates a passenger name record (PNR) for each traveler, which contains fields for entering identification codes for checked baggage. Separate PNR fields and codes are used for each item of baggage that is checked. The PNR entry is obtained from reading the embedded identification number on the attached RFID tag when the baggage is checked in.

United States Patent Publication No. 20040010430 to Cinquini, et al. published Jan. 15, 2004 entitled "Method and apparatus for providing a personal item drop off/return service at security checkpoints" discloses an apparatus and method that provide a personal item return service to an owner of a personal item that is subject to confiscation before the owner is admitted through a security checkpoint and into a secure area downstream of the security checkpoint. The security checkpoint can be located at a transportation center (airport, bus or train) or any entrance to a secure area at a building or sports arena. The owner can purchase from a vending machine or kiosk a container having sufficient prepaid postage based on the size or weight of the item, and mail the item to a destination selected by the owner. The service is located adjacent to the security checkpoint so that the owner need not lose his/her place in the security line.

United States Patent Publication No. 20040124982 to Kovach published Jul. 1, 2004 entitled "Method for tracking and processing passengers and their transported articles" discloses a method for tracking and handling people and articles at an airport using Radio-Frequency Identification ("RFID") tags. The RFID tag contains an electronic microchip with a memory portion, permanently attached to a substrate having a planar antenna. Each RFID tag is tuned to operate at a specific frequency and includes a unique identifier number stored in the memory portion. Passenger-specific information, such as passenger name, address and flight itinerary may be sent to the microchip for storage in the memory portion by means of an RF field provided by an external "scanner" device. The scanner also provides a means for reading data stored in the memory portion of the microchip.

United States Patent Publication No. 20040243518 to Clifton, et al. published Dec. 2, 2004 entitled "Individual identity authentication system" discloses an individual identity authentication system for authenticating an identity of an individual includes a client computer system and a service provider computer system. The client computer system may be implemented at various locations, for example, airport terminals, so as to provide ready access for various users to authenticate the identity of a particular individual. The service provider computer system is in communication with the client computer system and executes code for causing the service provider computer system to perform a number of steps. One step includes receiving a personal identification number (PIN) and a social security number (SSN) of an individual that is entered into a secure terminal associated with the client computer system. Another step includes authenticating an identity of the individual when the entered PIN and the entered SSN correspond to a registered PIN and a registered SSN of the individual.

Despite the foregoing, there is still a salient need for flexible and efficient chattel management techniques and apparatus that provide the user (and in fact the facility operator) with a highly configurable and modular system that can be readily adapted to a number of different paradigms. Such improved techniques and apparatus would also ideally be compatible with existing and incipient personal electronics and networking technologies.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In a first aspect, a portable computerized apparatus is disclosed. In one embodiment, the apparatus includes: a processor; memory in data communication with the processor; an first interface in data communication with the processor and configured to receive information that identifies an item to be shipped that has been selected by a user; a wireless interface in data communication with the processor and having a range associated therewith; and a software process operative to run on the processor.

In one variant, the software process comprises a plurality of instructions which are configured to, when executed, encode and transmit at least a portion of the information, the transmission via the wireless interface to a computerized system, the computerized system disposed within the wireless range of the wireless interface. The computerized system is in this variant configured to utilize the at least portion of the information to form a communication to be sent to a remote entity via a network interface of the computerized system; the communication is configured to cause a shipment by a third party of the item for the user from a first location to a second location.

In another embodiment, the portable computerized apparatus includes: a processor; memory in data communication with the processor; an first interface in data communication with the processor and configured to receive information that identifies a consumable item scanned by a user at a first location; a wireless interface in data communication with the processor and having a range associated therewith; and a software process operative to run on the processor, the software process comprising a plurality of instructions which are configured to, when executed, encode and transmit at least a portion of the information, the transmission via the wireless interface to a computerized system, the computerized system disposed within the wireless range of the wireless interface, the computerized system configured to utilize the at least portion of the information to form a communication to be sent to a remote entity via a network interface of the computerized system. The communication is in one variant configured to cause a shipment by a third party of one or more items similar to the consumable item from a second location to the first location in order to replenish at least the consumable item.

In another aspect, a computerized apparatus is disclosed. In one embodiment, the apparatus includes: 1) a portable computerized apparatus, the portable computerized apparatus comprising: a processor; memory in data communication with the processor; an first interface in data communication with the processor and configured to receive information that identifies an item; a wireless interface in data communication with the processor and having a range associated therewith; and a software process operative to run on the processor, the software process comprising a plurality of instructions which are configured to, when executed, encode and transmit at least a portion of the information, the transmission via the wireless interface; and 2) a second software process configured to run on a computerized system in data communication with the portable computerized apparatus via at least the wireless interface and a corresponding wireless interface of the computerized system, the second software process comprising a plurality of instructions.

In one variant, the plurality of instructions of the second process are configured to, when executed on the computerized system: receive the transmitted at least portion of the information from the software process of the portable apparatus; receive an input from a user via an input device of the computerized system, the input identifying a second location to which to ship the item; and utilize at least the at least portion of the information and the data relating to the second location to form a communication to be sent to a remote entity via a network interface of the computerized system. In this variant, the communication is configured to cause a transfer by a third party of the item from a first location to the second location, and cause payment for the transfer using at least previously stored payment information associated with the user.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a block diagram of one exemplary embodiment of the chattel management system of the invention.

FIG. 1a is an elevational view of an exemplary hand-held interrogator/receiver/display device according to the invention.

FIG. 1b is a block diagram of one exemplary local network topology useful with the chattel management system FIG. 1.

FIGS. 2a-2c are perspective views of envelope, box, and tube embodiments, respectively, of the shipping elements of the invention.

FIG. 3 is a block diagram of another exemplary embodiment of the chattel management system of the invention, adapted for wireless local interface and Internet access of a remote server and database.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Reference is now made to the drawings listed above, wherein like numerals refer to like parts throughout.

As used herein, the terms “chattel” and “chattels” refers generally to any type of property or possession (regardless of ownership), which may generally be carried on or by a person (including within associated transport devices such as luggage, etc.). Chattel includes, without limitation, car keys, personal security devices (e.g., mace, pepper spray), knives, handguns, ammunition, tools, personal electronic devices, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, jewelry, belt buckles or other metallized apparel, wrist watches, hats, cellular telephones, USB keys, glasses, magnetic or optical media, electric razors, personal computers, cameras, film, pagers, electronic games, purses, currency, iPods, etc.

As used herein, the term “passenger” shall mean any entity, whether human or otherwise, who utilizes a transportation modality.

As used herein, the term “transportation modality” refers to any form of transportation for either person, animals, and/or inanimate objects including, without limitation, aircraft, ships, ferries, land vehicles (buses, trains, cars, etc.), shuttles, etc.

As used herein, the term “computer program” is meant to include any sequence of human or machine cognizable steps which perform a function. Such program may be rendered in virtually any programming language or environment including, for example, C/C++, Fortran, COBOL, PASCAL, assembly language, markup languages (e.g., HTML, SGML, XML, VoXML), and the like, as well as object-oriented environments such as the Common Object Request Broker Architecture (CORBA), Java™ (including J2ME, Java Beans, etc.) and the like.

As used herein, the term “application” refers generally to a unit of executable software that implements theme-based functionality. The themes of applications vary broadly across any number of disciplines and functions (such as e-commerce transactions, shipping transactions, entertainment, calculator, Internet access, etc.), and one application may have more than one theme. The unit of executable software generally runs in a predetermined environment; for example and without limitation, the unit could comprise a downloadable Java Xlet™ that runs within the JavaTV™ environment.

As used herein, the term “database” refers generally to one or more tangible or virtual data storage locations, which may or may not be physically co-located with each other or other system components.

As used herein, the term “network” refers generally to data or communications networks regardless of type, including without limitation, LANs, WANs, intranets, internets, the Internet, cable systems, telecommunications networks, satellite networks, and Virtual Private Networks (VPNs), or collections or combinations thereof, whether based on wired, wireless, or matter wave modalities. Such networks may utilize literally any physical architectures and topologies (e.g., ATM, IEEE-802.3, X.25, Token Ring, SONET, 3G/3GPP/UMTS, 802.11, Hybrid fiber-coax (HFC), etc.) and protocols (e.g., TCP/IP, HTTP, FTP, WAP, GPRS, RTP/RTCP, WiFi, 3G, IEEE 802.11, etc.).

As used herein, the term “service provider” refers generally to services provided remotely to the user including, for

example, data streaming, data analysis, financial account management and trading, data archiving and storage, Internet access, content delivery, telecommunications, etc.

As used herein, the term “speech recognition” refers to any methodology or technique by which human or other speech can be interpreted and converted to an electronic or data format or signals related thereto. It will be recognized that any number of different forms of spectral analysis (such as MFCC (Mel Frequency Cepstral Coefficients) or cochlea modeling, may be used. Phoneme/word recognition, if used, may be based on HMM (hidden Markov modeling), although other processes such as, without limitation, DTW (Dynamic Time Warping) or NNs (Neural Networks) may be used. Myriad speech recognition systems and algorithms are available, all considered within the scope of the invention disclosed herein.

As used herein, the term “CELP” is meant to include any and all variants of the CELP family such as, but not limited to, ACELP, VCELP, and QCELP. It is also noted that non-CELP compression algorithms and techniques, whether based on companding or otherwise, may be used. For example, and without limitation, PCM (pulse code modulation) or ADPCM (adaptive delta PCM) may be employed, as may other forms of linear predictive coding (LPC).

As used herein, the term “digital processor” is meant generally to include all types of digital processing devices including, without limitation, digital signal processors (DSPs), reduced instruction set computers (RISC), general-purpose (CISC) processors, microprocessors, gate arrays (e.g., FPGAs), PLDs, reconfigurable compute fabrics (RCFs), array processors, and application-specific integrated circuits (ASICs). Such digital processors may be contained on a single unitary IC die, or distributed across multiple components.

As used herein, the term “integrated circuit (IC)” refers to any type of device having any level of integration (including without limitation ULSI, VLSI, and LSI) and irrespective of process or base materials (including, without limitation Si, SiGe, CMOS and GAs). ICs may include, for example, memory devices (e.g., DRAM, SRAM, DDRAM, EEPROM/Flash, ROM), digital processors, SoC devices, FPGAs, ASICs, ADCs, DACs, transceivers, memory controllers, and other devices, as well as any combinations thereof.

As used herein, the term “display” means any type of device adapted to display information, including without limitation CRTs, LCDs, TFTs, plasma displays, LEDs, and fluorescent devices.

Overview

The present invention allows users at a POD or other location to rapidly and easily ship their chattels to another location, such as to their travel destination or public gathering place (concert, amusement park, sporting event, etc.), to their home, or even a third party. As is known, millions of personal prohibited items are collected each year at airport security points alone. Faced with the choice of discard or abandoning the item(s) or canceling their travel, the great majority of people choose to abandon the chattel, or perhaps attempt to recover it later. Massive amounts of such items are collected each day throughout the nation’s airports.

In its simplest form, the mechanism for shipment comprises a human agent and/or drop box akin to those used for Fedex or other comparable courier services, that is disposed adjacent to the security checkpoint of the POD. Standard courier methods are used, which may be aided through the use of more sophisticated apparatus and techniques so as to facilitate rapid and cost effective use by the customer. A variety of coding and/or tracking methods may be used, including bar codes, magnetic strips, and RFID tags of the general type well

known in the art. These techniques may also be used in conjunction with one another, such as to perform different functions at different points throughout the processing or transit chain of the chattels.

In more sophisticated embodiment, personal electronics ranging from user-specific RFID devices, USB keys, PDAs, handhelds, cell phones or the like are used to transfer information to and/or from the kiosk or other processing entity associated with the service.

Description of Exemplary Embodiments

It is noted that while the system and methods of the invention disclosed herein are described with respect to point-of-departure (POD) management of chattels, such as might occur at an airport or other transportation facility, certain aspects of the invention may be useful in other applications, including, without limitation, other types of transaction relating to chattels, such as insuring or valuation thereof, courier services between two non-POD locations, etc.

Referring now to FIG. 1, a first embodiment of a system utilizing radio frequency identification (RFID) tags is described. The system **100** comprises generally one or more shipping elements **104** with associated tags **106**, and a parent device **102** (e.g., kiosk). The kiosk **102** contains an RF antenna **105**, as well as interrogator/reader module **108** and analysis/display module **110**. It will be recognized by those of ordinary skill that the various components and modules being part of the system **100** may be combined or integrated into one physical device as applicable, or separated, modularized, or any combination thereof, the illustrated embodiment being merely exemplary.

The tags **106** of each shipping element comprise radio frequency ID tags (RFID). RFID tags are well known in the communications art. The main advantages of an RFID sensor and tag system over other forms of ID tagging include (a) the orientation of the tag with respect to the sensor is not critical for a correct read of the tag information; (b) communication can occur within comparatively harsh operating environments; and (c) the communication range between the sensor and tag can be significant even when the RF frequencies used are within the power limitations of Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules concerning unlicensed transmitters. Accordingly, RFID technology is useful for several applications, especially those relating to asset inventory and management. RFID tags or various configurations are now ubiquitous and available at extremely low cost, thereby further enhancing the economic viability of the present invention.

The process of "reading" and communicating with an RFID tag such as that used in the system **100** of FIG. 1 comprises bringing a RFID tag within proximity to an RFID sensor ("reader") **108** which emanates a radio frequency or electric wake-up field having a limited range. The RFID tag **106** detects the presence of the wakeup field of the reader **108**, and subsequently various forms or protocols of handshake occur between the tag **106** and the reader **108** in order to exchange data. All of this communication between the tag and the sensor is performed using, e.g., RF carriers (or even wide-band waveforms) of one or more prescribed frequencies. As is well known in the art, so-called "low-frequency" systems operate in the kHz (e.g., 125 kHz) to low-MHz range (unlicensed). Low frequency systems are generally low cost and complexity and have comparatively limited range, but are attractive since the low frequency energy tends to suffer low losses from materials like metal, polymers, tissue, and the like. High-frequency systems operate in the low-MHz to GHz range (sometimes licensed). High-frequency systems in gen-

eral have greater range, but are more directional. Additionally, the performance of these high frequency tags may be adversely affected by electromagnetic radiation or proximate metallic objects.

Additionally, RFID tags are generally categorized as being "active" (i.e., carry an associated power source for operation of the on-tag integrated circuit, and are capable of spontaneous transmission after reader interrogation), or "passive" which utilizes incident RF energy or electric field (from the reader, for example) to generate electrical energy for use by the IC, and transmission. Passive tags are highly energy efficient, and require only an extremely small amount of electrical power to function.

In the present application, due to the premium on space and desire for ultra-light weight and low cost, a small antenna and package form factor is desired. This also avoids disincentives to the disposability of the device (and its parent shipping element). Based on the foregoing considerations, the present embodiment of the invention utilizes a low frequency (e.g., 125 kHz nominal) miniature passive tag having a miniature monopole antenna **109** of the type well known in the art, although it will be recognized that active tag architectures, lower or higher frequency systems, and alternate antenna configurations (such as "FIG. 8" loop, etc.) may be used depending on the particular application and desired attributes. Passive tags are a preferred mode, yet active tags are a utilitarian and desirable mode as well for certain applications.

The RFID tag **106** of the present invention further optionally includes an integrated circuit (IC) device (not shown) including a transceiver section and processing logic, as well as an integrated random access memory (RAM) device of the type commonly available with such devices adapted to store a plurality of data bytes such as data correlating to the identity of a given user, its date of deposit, its location (i.e., Terminal A at Airport B), destination, urgency/priority, contents classification (e.g., metallic, hazardous, etc.), weight as deposited, user's destination (if different from the shipping destination), contact information, etc. and the like. The memory device may also comprise, without limitation, PROMS, EPROMS, EEPROMS, UVEPROMS, SRAMs, DRAMs, SDRAMs, "flash" memory, and ferroelectric memory devices. In this capacity, the construction of the parent shipping element **104** is simplified, and less complex "off the shelf" RFID devices meeting the physical space limitations may be used with little or no adaptation.

In an exemplary embodiment, the RFID tag is distributed on one or more surfaces of the shipping element using a capacitive type substrate tag. See for example the "Bistatix™" RFID devices previously manufactured by Motorola/Indala Corporation (now ASSA ABLOY). These devices utilize a very thin, lightweight and low cost substrate employing non-metallic printed circuit technology. They are also extremely rugged, allowing for bending, crumpling, folding, etc., and can be printed on many different types of dielectric substrates. They also utilize an extremely small IC, capable of storing a limited amount of data (e.g., 96 bits), thereby mitigating the costs associated with the shipping element **104**, and its overall form factor. It will also be recognized that the shipping element surface(s) may be used as the substrate itself, thereby further reducing cost. In short, the "tag" can be printed and/or embedded onto or in the shipping element (box, envelope, carton, canister, etc.) at manufacture or thereafter in a highly cost-efficient manner. It will be recognized that capacitive or inductive tags may be used consistent with the invention.

Hence, by employing this (e.g., Bistatix) technology within the element **104** of the present invention, the RFID tag

may be disposed on any surface at extremely low cost and low profile. A complementary Motorola Bistatix reader may be used as the reader **108** of FIG. 1, although other configurations may be used as described elsewhere herein.

In operation, the tag “reader” **108** of FIG. 1 interrogates the element(s) **104** and RFID device **106** at its designated frequency, causing the tag to “wake” and initiate communications protocols disposed within the tag IC/memory. Once such protocols are established, the reader transmits preformatted data representative of the parameters desired to be loaded into the RFID memory device. For example, a box of “smart” envelopes **200** (described below with respect to FIG. 2a) can be swiped by the interrogator/reader **108** before use in the kiosk and encoded with identifying information, such as for example the airport/POD identification code, date of coding, etc. The envelopes or other elements **200** can optionally be sequentially encoded with numbers (e.g., envelope No. 1, 2, 3, etc.) to distinguish one from another. Alternatively, the tags **106** associated with the elements **200** can be pre-coded at manufacture, such as via slightly variant frequency of emission, etc. A variety of different approaches for distinguishing between two similarly situated shipping elements are well known to those of ordinary skill in the RFID arts, and accordingly are not described further herein.

As can be readily appreciated, the ability to uniquely identify a plurality of different shipping elements **104** using RF technology has great implications for, inter alia, accounting for such elements during use, security scanning and shipment. Herein lies a primary attribute or feature of the present invention; i.e., tracking and control of a number of different parcels or elements **104**. For example, the present invention allows the system operator to rapidly inventory and specifically identify particular elements **104** before shipment, and afterwards (i.e., during delivery to the user or designated recipient), thereby easily and efficiently accounting for all elements **104**. This is also useful during security scanning, and inventory before loading on the selected transportation mode (aircraft, etc.); e.g. to verify that no one such as a terrorist has surreptitiously inserted a “dummy” package into the transport bin or other mechanism between unloading of the kiosk and loading onto the aircraft. It will also be recognized, however, that the kiosk or other receptacle (or portion thereof) may simply be made mobile and securable such that it can be directly transferred to the aircraft without having to load or unload, thereby potentially frustrating attempts to gain unauthorized access thereto.

The RFID tags **106** of the embodiment of FIG. 1 has further utility for conducting inventory of “smart” shipping elements after manufacture. Since each element carries its own tag, each capable of uniquely identifying itself (whether by unique frequency assignment, or data encoded on the tag memory and transmitted to the reader), rapid reading of a plurality of tags disposed in close proximity to one another is possible. For example, a manufacturer, distributor or POD could also use the system **100** of the present invention to control inventory (such as by placing a reader at a “choke point” of a storage facility, thereby knowing precisely when each “smart” element **104** was brought in or out of the facility), or determine when a re-order of supplies is needed. Using the wireless data interface capabilities described subsequently herein, the kiosk can even automatically alert a supplier that it needs more shipping elements, akin to well known prior art CDPD approaches used for, inter alia, vending machines.

In yet another embodiment, the tag reader **108** is placed at the door or portal to the room or space (e.g., airport ingress/egress) by which a subject must pass, thereby necessarily

exposing the subject to the interrogation field generated by the reader **108**. Hence, where someone such as a terrorist attempts to obtain one or more elements **104** for unauthorized use (such as to try to sneak a package into a bin of authorized elements **104**) from the kiosk, a security perimeter is established and interrogation automatically conducted. This security perimeter can be quite small, such that anyone attempting to steal or smuggle in coded envelopes or containers **104** from the kiosk will trigger a proximity sensor based on the aforementioned interrogation.

Another feature of the present invention is coordination of the type of tag used, its frequency, its radiated power, etc., thereby allowing the user to control the range at which the interrogation field generated by the reader **108** will elicit a response from the tag **106**. It is undesirable to have the tags **106** respond at too great a distance, since this would necessitate removing the shipping elements in question and the reader **108** from the proximity of other devices in order to perform an inventory (i.e., the user would not be able to spatially differentiate between various tagged shipping elements **104**). Hence, the aforementioned low-power low-frequency passive tag is well suited to such applications. In the exemplary embodiment, the foregoing parameters are controlled such that the tag reader **108** has an effective “wake up” range of 1-3 ft., thereby allowing sufficient spatial resolution; however, this value can clearly be adjusted as need in the particular application. For example, in the “exit door” reader embodiment described elsewhere herein, a wake-up field lobe having a main axis of 5-10 feet may be needed to ensure adequate tag coverage as personnel ingress/egress.

The RFID tag **106** and reader **108** of the present invention, as well as other wireless or wired data links associated with the apparatus **100**, may also optionally utilize an encrypted data protocol, such that any transmissions from the tag **106** are encrypted, and accordingly must be decrypted by the authorized reader **108** before processing of the tag data, and/or writing of the tag **106** by the reader **108**, is permitted. Such encryption may be applied using any number of well known techniques instituted at the protocol level, or even at the air interface. For example, in one embodiment, the RFID tag **106** and reader **108** comprise more complex variant having a direct sequence spread spectrum (DSSS) communication system incorporating a PN (pseudo-noise) spreading code of the type well known in the communications art. In another embodiment, a frequency hopping spread spectrum (FHSS) having a hopping sequence is used to enhance security. The use of multi-bit encryption/encrypted data protocols and spread spectrum techniques for security is well known in the art, and accordingly will not be described further herein. See U.S. Pat. No. 5,539,775 entitled “Modulated spread spectrum in RF identification systems method” issued Jul. 23, 1996, and U.S. Pat. No. 5,629,981 entitled “Information management and security system” issued May 13, 1997, both incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.

In addition or instead of the air interface, encryption may also be applied at the protocol level, such as where public/private key methods, IKE, IPSec, or other techniques may be used to frustrate surreptitious interception or alteration of data transmitted to/from the REID device, or between other components. Furthermore, well known VPN or other tunneling protocols for encapsulating data during transmission across an untrusted network may be used between various entities of the present system, such as between a kiosk and a local distribution or management node.

Additionally, well known secure socket layer (SSL) or equivalent approaches may be employed across one or more links of the network(s), so as to enhance security.

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It will be appreciated that many different variations and combinations of the foregoing radio frequency communications apparatus and methods may be employed consistent with the invention; such different variations and combinations being too numerous to describe herein. All such variations and combinations, however, are easily recognized and within the possession of those of ordinary skill.

As shown in FIG. 1, the receptacle module 110 takes the data obtained from the tags 106 via reader 108 and analyzes it according to one or more algorithms. In the illustrated embodiment, the module 110 comprises a CISC or RISC processor having one or more computer programs running thereon, the programs analyzing the digitized tag data and for example, comparing it to stored data representing a series of allowed or authorized ID values for shipping elements 104, hence enhancing security. The receptacle can also be selectively locked until the reader 108 and module 110 validate the authenticity or other information associated with the particular transaction (including, e.g., user payment authorization, maximum allowed weight, size restrictions, etc.). To this end, the kiosk can be configured with an electronic scale integrated with the tag reader 108, or other complementary systems. In terms of size, the code of each shipping element 104 advantageously helps the system automatically determine the maximum size of the package; i.e., the family designation of each element 104, when read by the reader 108, tells the central processor that the package cannot physically be larger than certain dimensions.

It will further be recognized that each item of inventory or shipment can have associated with it other descriptive data, as shown in the example below:

ID Code	Category	Description	Owning entity	Transaction date	Routing Number
0001	Airport POD Shipping	10 x 12 Envelope	PHL/A	12/25/03	0000-1111-2222-3333

This descriptive data can, in whole or part, also be produced during a discrepancy alert (or when merely performing a normal transaction) to help identify the item in question.

As can be appreciated, the analysis/display functionality of the module 110 may also be provided by or integrated with another device. For example, so as to reduce clutter or space requirements, an existing device such as a Fedex or Airborne drop box, ATM machine, Internet or WiFi kiosk, flight insurance kiosk, etc. may be used as the parent platform for the reader 108 and/or module 110. Many existing devices include sufficient processing and storage capacity to perform the transaction processing function(s) along with those normally required by that equipment, and hence can be readily programmed or otherwise adapted by those of ordinary skill to accommodate the functionality described herein. As yet another alternative, a standard desktop or laptop PC, or airport boarding gate terminal may be used to provide the desired analysis/display functionality, such as where the user gets the item through security, yet none-the-less desires to ship the item rather than carry it on the aircraft.

As yet another alternative, the reader 108 and analysis/display module 110 may be integrated into a single device 170 (FIG. 1a), such as a handheld device akin to portable GPS receivers now ubiquitous. The user (which may be an employee, or even the shipper) may simply then pick up the unit, interrogate the items to be shipped (thereby encoding the package and retrieving ID data for the database in data com-

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munication with the handheld), and then deposit the package in a one-way access receptacle (which may also be interlocked with the handheld via wired or wireless link if desired).

As previously referenced, it will be recognized that the methods of the invention (as exemplified in FIG. 1) are ideally embodied in the form of one or more computer programs. Such program(s) may be rendered in virtually any programming language/environment including for example C, C++, Java, Fortran, Basic, Visual Basic, Unix, Perl, CORBA, or any other medium capable of reasonably implementing such a functionality.

In one exemplary embodiment, the reader module 108 comprises an antenna portion with embedded antenna 105, the latter being either monopole or dipole as desired to interface with the antenna structure of the tag 106 at the selected centerline frequency(ies). The antenna 105 of the module of the exemplary embodiment generates the wakeup or interrogation field needed to elicit a response from the tag 106 when the module is brought in sufficient proximity to the tag or vice-versa. The interrogation field intensity can also be made adjustable by the user, such that each facility can "tune" its module to the desired range/sensitivity. This adjustment can also be accomplished automatically and/or algorithmically (such as under control of the kiosk's central processor previously described herein, or an associated microcontroller).

The reader module 108 is also optionally equipped with a RF transceiver, such as a Bluetooth 2.4 GHz or IEEE-802.11a/b/g device, for communications with other entities, such as a local server or wireless gateway to another network. For example, the SiW1502 Radio Modem IC manufactured by Silicon Wave Corporation of San Diego, Calif., is a low-power consumption device with integrated RF logic and Bluetooth protocol stack adapted for Bluetooth applications. The chip is a fully integrated 2.4 GHz radio transceiver with a GFSK modem contained on a single chip. The SiW1502 chip is offered as a stand alone IC or, may be obtained with the Silicon Wave Odyssey SiW1601 Link Controller IC. The SiW1502 form factor is 7.0x7.0x1.0 mm package which is readily disposed within the interior volume of the kiosk described herein, or even a portable reader or "wand" which may be used by the carrier, such as for providing hand scans of chattels. An RF transceiver and modulator device is adapted to generally comply with the well known "Bluetooth™" wireless interface standard, IEEE-802.11, UWB, or alternatively, so-called "3G" (third generation) communications technologies. The Bluetooth wireless technology allows users to make wireless and instant connections between various communication devices, such as mobile devices (e.g., cellular telephones, PDAs, notebook computers, remote monitoring stations, and the like) and desktop computers or other fixed devices. Since Bluetooth uses radio frequency transmission, transfer of data is in real-time. The Bluetooth topology supports both point-to-point and point-to-multi-point connections. Multiple 'slave' devices can be set to communicate with a 'master' device. The devices are authenticated (optionally) using a RAND-based bonding or pairing process of the type well known in the art (e.g., in Mode 3 link layer security, or Mode 2 "L2CAP" or service-based security). In this fashion, the kiosk/reader of the present invention, when outfitted with a Bluetooth wireless suite, may communicate directly with other Bluetooth compliant mobile or fixed devices including a subject's cellular telephone, FDA, notebook computer, desktop computer, or other kiosks. Alternatively, a number of different RF-enabled "wands" performing chattel scanning may be monitored in real time at a cen-

tralized location, such as the kiosk or even a remote location using the kiosk or a local wireless gateway as a proxy node.

Bluetooth-compliant devices, inter alia, operate in the 2.4 GHz ISM band. The ISM band is dedicated to unlicensed users, including airports, thereby advantageously allowing for unrestricted spectral access. The exemplary modulator uses one or more variants of frequency shift keying, such as Gaussian Frequency Shift Keying (GFSK) or Gaussian Minimum Shift keying (GMSK) of the type well known in the art to modulate data onto the carrier(s), although other types of modulation (such as phase modulation or amplitude modulation) may be used.

Spectral access of the device is accomplished via frequency hopping spread spectrum (FHSS), although other approaches such as frequency divided multiple access (FDMA), direct sequence spread spectrum (DSSS, including code division multiple access) using a pseudo-noise spreading code, or even time division multiple access may be used depending on the needs of the user. For example, devices complying with IEEE Std. 802.11a/b/f/g may be substituted for the Bluetooth transceiver/modulator arrangement previously described if desired. Literally any wireless interface capable of accommodating the bandwidth and/or other requirements of the system may be used.

For example, in the case of an airport, the UWB system described below may be considered optimal, due to its low radiated power level, e.g., less than -41.3 dBm/MHz according the FCC unlicensed spectral UWB mask issued circa late 2003. This low power reduces the chance of deleterious interference with, e.g., aircraft communications systems, IFF systems, or other instrumentation or control functions.

In yet another embodiment of the invention, the module 400 utilizes an ultra wide-band (e.g., TM-UWB, OFDM, etc.) protocol for communication with other entities. Specifically, in one embodiment, the module 400 is fitted with a TM-UWB SoC device which utilizes pulse-position modulation (PPM), wherein short duration Gaussian pulses (nanosecond duration) of radio-frequency energy are transmitted at random or pseudo-random intervals and frequencies to convey coded information. Information is coded (modulated) onto the short duration carrier pulses by, inter alia, time-domain shifting of the pulse. For example, a pulse encodes a bit by being temporal shifting of the pulse with respect to a reference, such that a "late" pulse encodes a "0", while an early pulse encodes a "1". This scheme is somewhat akin to the well known frequency shift keying (FSK), wherein two (or more) side-band frequencies are utilized to encode data; e.g., 67 kHz down-shift=0; 67 kHz up-shift=1. TM-UWB devices have the advantage of ready penetration of various mediums, as well as ultra-low power consumption and low spectral density, thereby reducing power requirements and potential interference with other device, respectively. In one exemplary variant, the TM-UWB device of the invention comprises a half duplex, 2.0 GHz with variable data rate in excess of 1 Mbps with no forward error correction (FEC). The Gaussian monopulse is of the form:

$$V(t) = (t/\tau)e^{-(t/\tau)^2}$$

Where τ is a time decay constant related to the Gaussian monopulse duration, and center frequency $f_c = k/\tau$. The monopulse's bandwidth and center frequency are therefore directly related to the monopulse's temporal width or duration. This approach also shifts the transmission time of each monopulse over a significant time interval in accordance with a pseudo-noise (pn) "hopping" code of the type well known in the art, thereby advantageously distributing spectral density to make the spread. This approach is roughly comparable to

frequency hopping spread spectrum (FHSS) except in the time domain. Exemplary devices incorporating TM-UWB components including the timer, correlator, and digital base-band signal processor and controller units (not shown) are available from IBM Corporation (SiGe or silicon germanium-based) in the form of a chip set, although it will be recognized that an integrated single device is optimal for the invention. Additional detail on the implementation of TM-UWB systems is found in, e.g., "Time Modulated Ultra-Wideband for Wireless Applications"; Time-Domain Corporation, 2000, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

By using ISM or UWB communications, the RF module can also advantageously communicate with its parent device (e.g., a central node or gateway, another kiosk 110 with transceiver, etc.) without mutual interference with the RF signal of the tags 106, the latter operating at 125 kHz in the nominal embodiment.

In another exemplary embodiment of the system, an object-oriented distributed program having client and server portions distributed on respective client and server devices is utilized (FIG. 1b). As used herein, the terms "client device" and "personal electronic device" (PED) include, but are not limited to, personal computers (PCs), whether desktop, laptop, or otherwise, personal digital assistants (PDAs) such as the Apple Newton®, "Palm®" family of devices, handheld computers such as the Hitachi "e-Plate" or Dell Axim, personal communicators such as the Motorola Accompli devices, Motorola EVR-8401, J2ME equipped devices, cellular telephones, set-top boxes, or literally any other device capable of interchanging data with a network. Such devices may interface using wired or optical fiber mechanisms such as an IEEE Std. 802.3 Ethernet interface, Digital Subscriber Line (DSL), V.90 modem, DOCSIS modem, hybrid fiber-coax (HFC) cable, or alternatively via wireless mechanisms and protocols such as IS-95/CDMA-2000, Bluetooth™, IrDA interface, IEEE Std. 802.11(a) or (b), Wireless Application Protocol (WAP)/WTLS, GPRS, GSM, third-generation or "3G" systems (3GPP/UMTS), or any other of myriad data communication systems and protocols well known to those of skill in the communications arts. Creation of such computer programs is readily accomplished by those of ordinary skill in the programming arts, and accordingly is not described further herein.

As shown in FIG. 1b, the distributed software embodiment of the architecture 150 utilizes a server portion 152 and client portion 154 distributed on respective server 156 and client devices 158, ostensibly disposed at different physical locations, and in data communication with each other via a network 160. The client portion 154 of the software can be made "thin" to accommodate the comparatively lower hardware capabilities associated with many client devices 158. This architecture 150 is especially well suited to an object oriented programming environment (e.g., CORBA), as will be recognized by those of ordinary skill. In use, the user manually or automatically establishes communication between the client device and the sever portion, thereby allowing for transfer of data relevant to the impending transaction, such as the user's home address, credit card or payment information, etc. This approach obviates the user having to (i) stand at the kiosk and enter the information manually, and (ii) saves time since the link can be established while the user is performing other tasks, such as walking to the security checkpoint, parking their car, etc. Hence, the user merely need walk to the kiosk, insert their chattel into a shipping element 104, and deposit it on the reader 108. When authenticated and encoded, the receptacle will open to allow the element 104 to gravity feed into the locked receptacle. Alternatively, the encoding can be

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performed after entry into the receptacle (so as to frustrate surreptitious encoding and removal).

The aforementioned communication channel between the client device and module/server can also be used for two-way (i.e., forward and reverse channel) traffic, such as where transaction information is transmitted back to the client device for storage thereon. Alternatively, such information may be transmitted to a third party or proxy, such as to an e-mail server or URL, wherein the information is directly or indirectly provided to the user (such as via a direct confirmatory e-mail, or as a line item on a monthly statement). The transmitted information may optionally include date/time, user ID, location, routing or tracking number, payment method, and even other information such as the weight of the shipment, results of a security scan (e.g., by an installed e-beam, X-ray, neutron, magnetometer, or chemical “sniffer” device co-located with the kiosk), an image of the tracking label, estimated time/date of delivery, addressee, listing of contents, etc. The transfer of information to the client device may be fully automated, conditional upon assent from the user, or fully manual as desired.

The foregoing architecture may also be used to remotely initiate processes on other devices, such as PEDs, “smart” phones, network agents, or home PCs. For example, in one exemplary variant, the client device software is programmed to initiate an O/S window or Java applet running on a J2ME or equivalent equipped distant (e.g., PED) device upon transmission of a prompt corresponding to a given event. The window or applet includes a user name/password feature, wherein the distant user may instruct their client software to initiate certain algorithms or actions, such as transmission of personal information. In one embodiment, a WAP 2.0 client and proxy are utilized. Alternatively, of course, the distant end user may access the desired target IP address or other network node via the Internet or comparable network directly via the PED, thereby effectuating the desired transaction.

In another embodiment of the invention, a SIP (Session Initiation Protocol) enabled device or comparable is used to establish a secure user session to transmit the required information. In one variant, a “PoC” (push-to-talk {PTT} over cellular) approach is used, wherein the user’s mobile device includes an architecture that supports instantaneous communications via, e.g., the aforementioned SIP protocol layered over a UMTS IMS architecture of the type well known in the communications arts. For example, the user’s client process can be configured to instigate a PoC session upon the user selecting the chattel proxy or application server as a “buddy” and invoking a PTT transmission. So-called “PTx” or “push-to-anything” technology may be used for this purpose; e.g., pre-formatted packages of data necessary to perform chattel management or related functions can be immediately transmitted to the desired receiver via a one-button transmit functionality. These packets may be encapsulated for security purposes, e.g., via an application layer or other protocol such as Digest, IPSec, MIKEY, etc. Alternatively, where Bluetooth is utilized, the proxy or application server can conduct a (e.g., user-permissive) object pull according to the K-11 or OBEX profiles.

The proxy or application server may also require authentication of the user (or mutual authentication) before any data push or pull is allowed, such as via a RAND challenge-based approach or the like. This helps mitigate “spoofing” or surreptitious denial of service to the user, and substitution of an unauthorized device in place of the true chattel owner, or reception of the user’s personal data by an unauthorized device.

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In another embodiment, the user’s cellular telephone equipped with Assisted GPS (A-GPS) or other such locating system can be used to provide forwarding information. Specifically, in one variant, the user’s A-GPS system is prompted to save the coordinates of a particular location where the package must be delivered. For example, a user may want his chattel shipped to a third party where he/she is presently located. The user can merely push a soft function key on their client process, the soft function key either saving the coordinate for a later time/date, or transmitting it to a designated agent (such as the chattel management proxy) described elsewhere herein. That way, the user can merely specify the saved/transmitted location as the destination, without having to remember addresses, zip codes, etc. for the destination. Alternatively, the user can maintain a log or listing of saved GPS coordinates (and or address information) for easy recall at a later date.

In a manner somewhat analogous to the A-GPS, the user can also use their client process to exchange information with other user’s devices (such as via a Bluetooth “discovery” process or OBEX object exchange). For example, a user may want their chattel shipped to a friend they are traveling with; the user can then handshake with their friend’s device to pull/receive an electronic business card with the required delivery information. Such an approach may be useful where the chattel is rented out or intended for temporary use. Consider, for example, where the user rents a car, drives to the airport, leaves the car, and approaches the security checkpoint. The user can (while at the car rental agency) use either GPS location or “pushed/pulled” data as the basis for a communication to the chattel management system, the data instructing the latter as to where to return the car keys. Myriad other configurations will be recognized by those of ordinary skill provided the present disclosure.

In yet another exemplary embodiment, a user can utilize a more simplified device for communicating with the kiosk or module 110. For example, a coded RFID device (to be distinguished from that in the shipping element 104) may be used to automatically provide the kiosk/module 110 with the user’s information, much in the way the prior art Mobil “Speed Pass” provides fueling station pumps with payment information, or the MasterCard Paypass system allows for commercial transactions. As another option, a USB key of the type well known in the art can be simply plugged into an accessible USB port of the module 110, thereby potentially both (i) transferring the user’s information, and (ii) saving a user record of the transaction within the user’s key. This approach can be coupled with the rapid drop capability described elsewhere herein, such that the kiosk associates a given chattel passed through its aperture or slot with a given user. For example, in one variant, the user simply places the chattel in a holding slot or receptacle, this action which prompts the user via a CRT, LCD, TFT, LEDs, audio prompt, or other UI to scan their RFID device past a sensor. After the kiosk controller/processor module and reader interrogates and retrieves the desired information from the RFID device (and also another entity or database, if desired, such as a pay authorization entity), the user is presented with a visual or other display of the shipping information, at which point the user may confirm or cancel. If confirmed, the kiosk then automatically opens the aperture or slot to receive the user’s device. Internal mechanisms within the kiosk then either (i) tag the chattel as belonging to a particular user, such as via attachment of a tag or label, insertion in a “tagged” shipping element 104, diversion to a segregated chute or container, etc. Alternatively, the user can be prompted to affix a bar code, label, tag, or other identifying device, such as may be issued

by the kiosk. Hand sorting of the various chattels may then be accomplished by personnel emptying the kiosk receptacle. In another embodiment, computer-readable purchase receipts using multi-dimensional bar codes of the type well known in the art, or other comparable mechanisms, may be used consistent with the invention for encoding the chattels and/or shipping elements **104**.

As yet another alternative, the user may simply affix their personal RFID device to the chattel, scan as previously described (such as where the receptacle holding slot/aperture is integrated with or proximate the personal RFID reader), and authorize, at which point their chattel and their personal RFID device are collectively shipped to the destination. This variant obviates use of the second RFID device within the shipping element, since the user's RFID device contains all of the necessary information, some of which can be encoded onto the device at the time of scan at the kiosk. For example, the user's RFID device can be equipped to have sufficient storage capacity and to receive data from the kiosk reader/interrogator such that this encoding of additional information occurs seamlessly.

As yet another alternative, the kiosk may be fitted with a card reader adapted to receive cards pre-encoded ("pre-paid") with a given monetary value. For example, as is well known, cards bearing magnetic media may be encoded at a remote terminal after the user deposits a given amount of currency. Such cards are currently employed, for example, in libraries where photocopy machines are present, or for telecommunications services. In the present context, the user might deposit a comparatively large amount of currency at the encoding terminal to encode or pre-pay for the deposited amount. Subsequent insertions of the card into the card reader read the encoded data (correlating to a currency balance remaining), subtract the amount of the current transaction, and then recode the card commensurate with the remaining balance. In this fashion, the user may avoid having to carry currency or change each time they wish to use the terminal; rather, they simply swipe or insert/retract the card from the reader/encoder, thereby automatically debiting the card.

As yet another alternative, a user's pre-paid cellular device can be exchanged for services in shipping their chattel. In one exemplary embodiment, the prepaid cellular device is configured to interface with the kiosk (such as via direct physical or wired connection, or wireless link such as RF, inductive, IRdA, or other) such that the service provider for the prepaid device authorizes payment of the chattel shipping via the cell phone/kiosk interface.

As even another alternative, the user who travels frequently can pre-code their devices using apparatus disposed at the POD, their home, or other locations. For example, in one embodiment, the user can attach an RFID devices to their chattels of any significant worth (e.g., cell phone, PDA, car keys, etc.) and encode them with their personal information. Alternatively, these devices may be disposed within the chattels at time of manufacture, and then encoded at or after purchase by the user. Once encoded, these devices can then be immediately scanned when placed in proximity to the reader **108** at the kiosk or other location. This obviates having to carry another currency source or personal RFID device.

In another embodiment, user-specific biometric data can be used alone or in conjunction with other data sources to authenticate or provide the required input to the kiosk. For example, in one variant, the user's fingerprint, retinal scan, facial recognition software scan, or voiceprint are used in a two-of-two, three-of-three, etc. coincidence circuit; i.e., when all inputs can be authenticated and correlated to one individual, the user's data is accessed (such as may be kept in

a secure data facility in data communication with the kiosk or its proxy) and used as the basis for payment, shipping destination, etc.

In another embodiment, the system **100** can be coupled to the passenger reservation system operated by the relevant transportation agent (e.g., airline or travel agent), such that upon entry of the user's personal information, the reservation system is accessed to retrieve the user's destination and/or routing information. The option of "route to destination" can then be presented to the user, such as via a touch screen display on the kiosk, thereby allowing one-touch destination selection. Other options may include "home", "office", or any parties designated by the user either manually or via download of information from the personal RFID device or client device (e.g., PDA or cell phone).

The foregoing approaches also have the added benefit (to varying degrees) of reducing overhead costs associated with setting up and managing the trust, since electronic transactions/reporting are often more cost efficient than manual performance (such as by employees interacting with various entities in person or over the telephone or via mail).

It will also be recognized that use of the invention in a POD application may also carry certain economies of scale which can be exploited to the advantage of the carrier or others. For example, where many people traveling on an aircraft utilize the services described herein to forward their chattel to their travel destination, that same aircraft on which they are traveling can be used as the carrier mechanism for these chattels. Hence, if the shipping and security scanning procedures of the chattels can be accomplished rapidly enough, the chattels can optionally be loaded on the very same aircraft (or another traveling to that same destination), and provided to the traveler upon their egress from the aircraft using procedures which are in effect substantially the inverse of those described herein for registering/shipping the chattel.

In yet another embodiment, the shipping service provided to the user can be virtual in nature either in place of or in conjunction with the tangible services previously described. For example, where the user has an electronic device with important information (e.g., laptop, PDA, etc.), yet they are not allowed to take the device or magnetic media on the aircraft or other modality, they can (i) download the relevant information to a proxy agent (e.g., software process) running on the kiosk or its proxy, and direct the proxy agent to forward the information to a designated real or virtual storage location (such as an e-mail account, accessible URL, third party storage facility, etc.), and (ii) utilize the kiosk to physically transfer the device to a designated location. Hence, where the user simply needs a few data files from their PDA, they can download these using, e.g., a Bluetooth, WiFi, or other wireless link and encrypted protocols to the proxy, which then forwards the files via e-mail to an account accessible by the user at the destination. They then contemporaneously ship the device to their home for later retrieval.

It will also be recognized that depending on the configuration of the tag **106**, it may be encoded at time of deposit (or before/after, such as via the user's PDA which can transmit data to the kiosk module **110** or a connected device) with various other types of information, including visual or voice data. Hence, the shipping element can carry audible instructions or information when decoded at the destination using an appropriate reader with audio capability. Hence, the package can also be authenticated to some degree by the recipient before opening it. Other types of information, including images, data, etc. can also be encoded into the shipping element.

In another variant, the kiosk may be equipped to generate photographic, IR, X-ray, spectrographic, or even holographic images of the chattel for, e.g., (i) electronic transmission to the user at the destination, such as where merely the appearance or other attribute of the device is important or sufficient; (ii) for a security or “purchase receipt” record of what was actually deposited at the kiosk, e.g., for insurance policy claim use or loss claims against the carrier; or (iii) use by the carrier in sorting a bin of chattels. In the case of option (iii), users may simply swipe their personal RFID device, which after authorization, results in the kiosk generating the image of the chattel, one (tactile or electronic) copy being provided to the user either directly or indirectly, such as via paper copy or e-mail to the user’s designated account, and one for use by the carrier in sorting the receptacle. Other data relating to the chattel may also be obtained and encoded/transmitted, such as the item’s weight, ferrous content/magnetization, electric field, luminance, fluorescence, or phosphorescence, fast neutron activation (FNA) signature, etc.

Referring now to FIG. 2a-2c, various embodiments of the “smart” shipping element 104 of the invention are described. In these embodiments, the RFID tag 106 is disposed within a soft, pliable substrate (which may be part of the shipping element 104 itself or otherwise mated thereto, such as using an adhesive). Ideally, the tag 106 is made as discreet as possible, thereby not alerting users to its presence. An envelope (FIG. 2a), box (FIG. 2b), and tube (FIG. 2c) are shown, although other forms may be used. The envelope pouch of FIG. 2a is ideally formed from a flexible material such as a polymer (e.g., polyethylene), Tyvek, or even paper, although other materials such as aramid fibers, elastomers, shrink-wrap or thermally responsive polymers, or flexible composites may be used as well. In yet another embodiment (not shown) the non-metallic conductive inks of the tag 106 are printed directly on the pliable material during manufacture (and the IC mated accordingly). The exemplary “Bistatix” tag 106 is generally substrate-agnostic, and therefore will operate suitably using the materials listed above or others.

It will be apparent from the foregoing discussion that myriad different types of shipping element 104 and tag 106 configurations may be used, the foregoing embodiment being merely exemplary. The receptacle/kiosk may be adapted to accept only certain shapes and/or sizes of element 104, thereby limiting what can be deposited therein.

In yet another embodiment, the kiosk can be configured to automatically package the chattel for the user, the latter merely depositing down a sized slot or aperture. The slot or aperture (in conjunction with other mechanical elements) creates an upper bound on the size of chattel that can be inserted. The user then merely swipes their personal RFID device past the reader, which encodes the tag 106 on the shipping element, seals the element 104, and charges the user’s account based on the prevailing cost structure (e.g., weight/destination/priority/special handling). If for whatever reason the item cannot be processed, such as where it is too heavy or the user’s payment method is refused, the kiosk merely activates a chute at the bottom of the kiosk to eject the user’s chattel into a tray, much akin to a vending machine. Again, the slot or aperture can be actuated only upon conditions precedent if desired, such as authentication of the user’s payment source, etc.

In another embodiment, the kiosk includes an LCD display and magnetic card reader of the type well known in the art e.g., similar to those commonly found on gasoline pumps. Such terminal also includes a “soft” keypad having a plurality of fixed or soft (programmable or software controlled) function keys. Such soft keypad may comprise, for example, a

capacitive keypad, CRT-based “touch screen”, LCD, TFT, or any other similar technology. It will be recognized that mechanical keys or button assemblies may also be used; however, such devices are generally less weather and foreign-matter resistant, and require greater maintenance. The function keys provide a number of different functions to the user, including a “print receipt” function (which may be coupled to a paper or electronic receipt functionality), debit/credit select keys, transaction acknowledgement key, as well as an alphanumeric keypad for entering data such as passwords, Y/N inputs, etc. Such functions and technology are well known to those of ordinary skill in the electronic arts, and accordingly not described further herein.

Once the commands for the desired transactions have been received by the kiosk, the user is prompted and then selects their payment mode (e.g., debit card) via a fixed function key, and then swipes their card through the card reader. When the magnetic strip (or smart card) is read by the reader, the user’s debit information is transferred to the processor of the terminal, wherein the algorithm running thereon next initiates a request for the user’s password or “PIN” code via the display device (or alternatively via an audio interface driven by e.g., stored CELP voice data file, not shown). After the user enters the PIN code or password via the keypad, the authorization is obtained from the user’s CCA or financial institution using any number of existing commercial financial transaction secure links well known in the industry. Once authorized, the controller of the controller issues a command to enable the reader 108 and, optionally unlock the locking device to allow insertion of the shipping element 104.

In yet another embodiment, the chattels of two or more users can be aggregated into a common shipment or shipping element 104 in order to reduce costs. For example, where a number of passengers in a security checkpoint are traveling to the same destination, and a plurality of them have chattels which cannot be taken on board, the users can pair up in groups of two or more and utilize a common shipping element. To this end, the POD facility, air carrier, etc. can also provide or facilitate such a service, such as where the air carrier provides a kiosk whereby all user’s with rejected chattels can deposit their chattels for shipment to the destination via the passenger’s aircraft or another aircraft/mode. This service may be provided either gratuitously or for a fee.

In another embodiment, the user, carrier or service provider can provide “stick-on” or otherwise selectively attachable RFID, bar code, magnetic strips, or even printed tags which the user can apply to their chattels for tracking. For example, in one case, the user can apply a number of pre-coded bar code labels to each of their chattels before travel (or even at the POD once they know that the chattel cannot be transported via the selected modality). The user then simply scans the label with a bar code reader provided at the kiosk (akin to a prior art supermarket checkout kiosk), and deposits the chattel in the receptacle (whether in a shipping element 104 or not) for subsequent handling by the carrier.

To this end, users can establish pre-existing accounts, much like a prior art Fedex or UPS account, whereby the payment, shipment, etc. information is already known by the carrier. Multiple different options can also be selected by the user such as, e.g., at time of scanning, wherein the CRT or other kiosk display device prompts the user to select a shipping destination, etc. The carrier can also utilize the aforementioned economies regarding co-location to make the service more cost efficient. For example, a kiosk at San Diego Airport is likely to receive a large number of chattels from people in the greater San Diego area requesting that the chat-

tels be returned to their home address, thereby allowing for grouping of deliveries for greater economy.

Furthermore, “intelligent” kiosk management can be utilized, whether in operation and/or construction, so as to increase economies. For example, the kiosk or subsequent handling mechanisms can be configured to selectively sort the deposited shipping elements or chattels based on destination. Furthermore, the controller module of the kiosk can be programmed to alert a parent or proxy node of the need for unloading of the receptacle under certain conditions, such as when a sufficient number of items for a given destination are received. In order to reduce cost to the user, the latter may also be given the option to trade cost for latency; i.e., if a user can wait longer to get their chattel back, their cost of shipment can be lowered. This dynamic is particularly relevant to the present invention, since many travelers won’t arrive back home for several days anyway, thereby increasing their tolerance to longer shipping delays.

This metric can also be managed by the kiosk or carrier, such as where kiosks are preferentially distributed (or alternatively are equipped with receptacles equating to different shipping priorities or delays) such that their users are skewed towards the relevant portion of the population. For example, a “long delay” shipment kiosk may be placed at the international terminal, a shorter latency kiosk may be suited better to the domestic or commuter flight terminals.

Also, the carrier or provider of the kiosk can coordinate with other carriers (such as Fedex or UPS) so as to intelligently schedule and manage distribution of the chattels to their destinations. For example, with data coupling of the kiosk carrier system with that of other carriers, and coordination there between, duplication of routes can be minimized, such as through a cross-carrier distribution agreement.

As shown in FIG. 3, the Internet or other internet/intranet is used as the basis for one embodiment of the “backbone” of the system 300. The system 300 includes, for example, a backend server 306, a plurality of “front end” kiosk devices 308, including one or more mobile WAP-enabled wireless devices 310, the kiosks interfaced through a wireless base station 312 and WAP gateway 314 of the type well known in the art, the latter being in data communication with the Internet 302. The WAP associated WTLS security protocols may also be employed if desired. Clearly, the use of WAP and a wireless topology in this embodiment is merely illustrative.

The Internet 302 advantageously makes use of the well known and generally ubiquitous TCP/IP protocol, thereby assuring compatibility and access by a wide variety of existing client devices. The server 306 is coupled to a database 307 which provides, inter alia, storage of user-related data and information such as personal information, statistics, security information, credit card information, etc. It will be recognized that multiple database entities may be used, such multiple entities being either co-located or disparate. The database 307 may also be functionally (as opposed to physically) partitioned and firewalled, such that various types of data are restricted from access by certain entities. Additionally, the POD kiosks 308 may be coupled directly to the Internet, LAN, WAN, MAN, intranet, etc. via a service provider 332 (dedicated or otherwise).

The kiosks 308 may include for example audio-visual apparatus such as an H.323-compliant protocol suite adapted for transfer of audio-visual data between the user and a customer service agent 336, whereby the user and agent can communicate audibly (such as via VoIP software installed on the Kiosk and agent terminal) and visually to complete the transaction. Alternatively, the kiosk 308 can be configured with speech recognition software of the type now well known

in the art to convert audible speech by the user to text or other data which is then utilized by the distant end to accomplish any number of functions such as chattel deposit and routing, providing on-demand information, etc. A text-to-speech (TTS) capability may also be employed, wherein pre-stored or dynamically generated data files may be converted to audible speech at the kiosk. Alternatively, pre-stored CELP or similar compressed speech data files may be decompressed and played at the Kiosk to provide audio information.

A capacitive or other type of touch screen is optionally provided as an input device, with the display of the kiosk 308 (not shown) acting as both a display device and an input device, thereby simplifying the user interface.

In another embodiment, a peer-to-peer arrangement (either aided by a network agent or server, or true P2P) may be used as the model for communications between entities, whether customer-to-carrier, customer-to-customer, carrier-to-carrier, etc.). It is even envisioned that a user-based bidding or barter system may be established, such as where users may place bids on unclaimed chattels (somewhat akin to the prior art “eBay” paradigm), or barter between themselves via P2P to exchange chattels. For example, a user unable to carry a given chattel on an aircraft may invoke a P2P session over their WiFi link, and solicit a bid for the chattel from another party on say, an incoming aircraft or waiting to pick up a passenger in the terminal. The selling user can then deposit the chattel in a nearby kiosk as described elsewhere herein, and the purchaser can be electronically enabled to access the chattel after payment is made. Hence, the kiosk can act as an electronic transaction arbiter and temporary storage location, for a fee to be extracted from the seller or buyer (or both). The particular kiosk where the chattel is deposited can also be readily identified to the purchaser via their PED or other means, such as a page to their cell phone, etc. A user can also reroute their chattel to another location after deposit. These transactions can also be conducted via cell phone if desired, again with the kiosk or system 100 acting as the intermediary for the transaction.

It will be recognized that myriad different audio, display, and input technologies may be utilized consistent with the invention to transfer information between the user and the “agent” of the carrier.

Furthermore, the term “kiosk” is not limited to any particular physical layout, location, or arrangement. For example, a kiosk may be fixed or mobile, stand-alone or as part of another structure or component, indoor or outdoor, etc.

Also, the kiosks or their components also need not be in one physical location; rather a “virtual” kiosk scattered at various locations throughout the POD for example is envisaged, acting electronically as one kiosk. In this fashion, data received and actions taken by various different physical kiosks can be coordinated and/or analyzed as desired.

Furthermore, the kiosks of the present invention(s) need not be fixed, but may also be mobile, such as where they are mounted on vehicles which are roving in nature. In one variant, an airport cart is configured with a mobile kiosk with secure WiFi or UWB link; the driver drives the cart to different security locations periodically to pick up chattels from users (or merely allow them to interact with the kiosk as previously described herein), or even for incidental user contact, much the way one waves down a taxicab.

As yet another option, the interface between the shipping agent or its proxy and the user may be implemented using a virtual private network (VPN) of the type well known in the art, which provided secure end-to-end communications between two or more points via an untrusted network such as the Internet. This embodiment may be implemented via the

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aforementioned WAP/WTLS technology suite and associated protocol stacks, through a dedicated or shared RADIUS server and tunneled packets, or any other comparable arrangement capable of restricting access to the transmissions, database or other repositories of information to only authorized personnel. Use of such security technology may be an important criteria in certain contexts, since users may want to have their personal data (i.e., identity, place of residence, credit card information, etc.) maintained in strict confidence to avoid any fear of surreptitious theft and use of this information without authorization (e.g., "identity theft"), or attempts to interfere with the delivery of the shipping element at or near its destination.

The Internet may also advantageously be used as a medium for receipt of shipment requests or solicitation of new prospective participants, in that a URL (e.g., designating a worldwide website) may be used to provide information, receive data, requests for additional information, etc. Furthermore, meta-tags embedded in the site will key Internet search engines to locate the site upon the initiation of an appropriate search using an Internet search engine (such as Yahoo!, Google™, etc.). In one embodiment, an applet or comparable browser mechanism is initiated upon such search, the applet being configured to alert the user to the existence of the URL/website when a search having appropriate parameters is initiated.

It will be appreciated that the chattel transport services described herein may also be provided in conjunction with other services, whether related or not. For example, chattels may be stored (either at the POD or another location) for a finite period of time at the user's request, somewhat like an airport or bus terminal locker. In one variant, the transport destination may be designated as OPOD (original POD), such that the user can merely pay for the storage of his/her chattel, and then recover it at a later time, such as upon the completion of their return flight. Others may also be authorized to access the storage facility/receptacle, such as family members, etc.

Other services may comprise, e.g., cleaning, repair, maintenance, testing, etc. of the chattel, registration in a database, etc. The user may also be presented with POS (point of sale) options at the POD for these or other goods/services, such as flight insurance, chattel shipment insurance, MP3 or music downloads, or even carrier-authorized replacement chattels for those being surrendered by the user.

It is also noted that the various tracking or marking mechanisms described herein (i.e., RFID, bar codes, magnetic strips, etc.) are not exclusive of one another, and in fact may be used together to advantage, such as to perform different functions at different points throughout the processing or transit chain of the chattels. For example, the RFID tagging approach may be more suitable to one portion of the chain (such as user interface at the kiosk), whereas magnetic media may be more desirable for other processing tasks. These different media may also be made selectively removable if desired, so that a chattel or shipping element **104** can be "marked" and "unmarked" if desired during processing, delivery, security scanning, etc. Encodings used on the shipping elements can also be made human readable if desired to facilitate such processing.

It should be recognized that while the foregoing discussion of the various aspects of the invention has described specific sequences of steps necessary to perform the methods of the present invention, other sequences of steps may be used depending on the particular application. Specifically, additional steps may be added, and other steps deleted as being optional. Furthermore, the order of performance of certain steps may be permuted, and/or performed in parallel with

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other steps. Hence, the specific methods disclosed herein are merely exemplary of the broader methods of the invention.

While the above detailed description has shown, described, and pointed out novel features of the invention as applied to various embodiments, it will be understood that various omissions, substitutions, and changes in the form and details of the device or process illustrated may be made by those skilled in the art without departing from the invention. The described embodiments are to be considered in all respects only illustrative and not restrictive. The scope of the invention is, therefore, indicated by the appended claims rather than the foregoing description. All changes that come within the meaning and range of equivalence of the claims are to be embraced within their scope.

What is claimed is:

1. A portable computerized apparatus, comprising:

a processor;
memory in data communication with said processor;
an first interface in data communication with the processor and configured to receive information that identifies an item to be shipped that has been selected by a user;
a wireless interface in data communication with the processor and having a range associated therewith; and
a software process operative to run on said processor, said software process comprising a plurality of instructions which are configured to, when executed, encode and transmit at least a portion of said information, the transmission via the wireless interface to a computerized system, the computerized system disposed within the wireless range of the wireless interface, said computerized system configured to utilize said at least portion of said information to form a communication to be sent to a remote entity via a network interface of the computerized system;

wherein said communication is configured to cause a shipment by a third party of said item for said user from a first location to a second location.

2. The portable computerized apparatus of claim 1, wherein:

the selection occurs at a then-current location of the user; and
said shipment by a third party of said item for said user from a first location to a second location comprises a shipment from the first location to the then-current location.

3. The portable computerized apparatus of claim 1, wherein the first interface comprises a user interface capable of receipt of a user's speech, said user's speech comprising at least a portion of the information that identifies the item, said portable computerized apparatus further configured to cause conversion of the received user's speech into a digital representation thereof.

4. The portable computerized apparatus of claim 3, wherein the first interface further comprises a bar code scanning apparatus configured to receive the information from a bar code.

5. The portable computerized apparatus of claim 1, wherein the first interface comprises a bar code scanning apparatus configured to receive the information from a bar code.

6. The portable computerized apparatus of claim 1, wherein the item comprises an item having a bar code printed thereon or affixed thereto.

7. The portable computerized apparatus of claim 1, wherein the second location comprises a previously stored location entered by the user, the previously stored location

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being selected by the user as the second location via an input device of the portable computerized apparatus.

8. The portable computerized apparatus of claim 1, wherein the second location comprises a previously stored location entered by the user, the previously stored location being selected by the user as the second location via an input device of the computerized system.

9. The portable computerized apparatus of claim 8, wherein the previously stored location comprises a location associated with the user's home or office.

10. The portable computerized apparatus of claim 1, wherein the portable computerized apparatus comprises a substantially bar-shaped or wand form factor, and the wireless interface comprises a wireless interface compliant with an IEEE 802.11 standard.

11. A portable computerized apparatus, comprising:

a processor;

memory in data communication with said processor;

an first interface in data communication with the processor

and configured to receive information that identifies a

consumable item scanned by a user at a first location;

a wireless interface in data communication with the processor and having a range associated therewith; and

a software process operative to run on said processor, said software process comprising a plurality of instructions

which are configured to, when executed, encode and

transmit at least a portion of said information, the trans-

mission via the wireless interface to a computerized

system, the computerized system disposed within the

wireless range of the wireless interface, said computer-

ized system configured to utilize said at least portion of

said information to form a communication to be sent to

a remote entity via a network interface of the computer-

ized system;

wherein said communication is configured to cause a ship-

ment by a third party of one or more items similar to said

consumable item from a second location to the first

location in order to replenish at least said consumable

item.

12. The portable computerized apparatus of claim 11, wherein:

the consumable item comprises a bar code disposed at least partly on an exterior surface of said consumable item;

the portable computerized apparatus comprises a substantially bar-shaped or wand form factor;

the wireless interface comprises a wireless interface compliant with an IEEE 802.11 standard; and

the first interface comprises a bar code scanning device configured to enable said scanning of said bar code of said consumable item.

13. The portable computerized apparatus of claim 12, wherein the consumable item comprises a container configured to contain one or more other items therein during shipment.

14. A computerized apparatus, comprising:

1) a portable computerized apparatus, the portable computerized apparatus comprising:

a processor;

memory in data communication with said processor;

an first interface in data communication with the processor and configured to receive information that identifies an item;

a wireless interface in data communication with the processor and having a range associated therewith; and

a software process operative to run on said processor, said software process comprising a plurality of

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instructions which are configured to, when executed, encode and transmit at least a portion of said information, the transmission via the wireless interface; and

2) a second software process configured to run on a computerized system in data communication with the portable computerized apparatus via at least the wireless interface and a corresponding wireless interface of the computerized system, the second software process comprising a plurality of instructions configured to, when executed on the computerized system:

receive the transmitted at least portion of the information from the software process of the portable apparatus;

receive an input from a user via an input device of the computerized system, the input identifying a second location to which to ship the item; and

utilize at least said at least portion of said information and said data relating to said second location to form a communication to be sent to a remote entity via a network interface of the computerized system;

wherein said communication is configured to cause a transfer by a third party of the item from a first location to the second location, and cause payment for said transfer using at least previously stored payment information associated with the user.

15. The computerized apparatus of claim 14, wherein:

the item comprises a bar code disposed at least partly on an exterior surface of said item;

the portable computerized apparatus comprises a substantially bar-shaped or wand form factor;

the wireless interface comprises a wireless interface compliant with an IEEE 802.11 standard; and

the first interface comprises a bar code scanning device configured to enable said scanning of said bar code of said item.

16. The computerized apparatus of claim 15, wherein the computerized apparatus further comprises a speech recognition apparatus configured to receive a user's speech input and render the received speech input in a digital format for use by at least one of the computerized system and/or the remote entity.

17. The computerized apparatus of claim 15, wherein said payment for said transfer using at least previously stored payment information associated with the user comprises access via a network of at least one server disposed remotely from both the first and second locations.

18. The computerized apparatus of claim 14, wherein said item comprises an electronic data structure, and said transfer comprises a transfer of the data structure over a network.

19. The computerized apparatus of claim 18, wherein said electronic data structure comprises a Moving Pictures Experts Group audio file format rendering of a musical composition.

20. A portable computerized device, comprising:

a data processing apparatus;

memory in data communication with said data processing apparatus, said memory comprising data indicative of a consumable item used by a user at a first location;

a wireless interface in data communication with the data processing apparatus and having a range associated therewith, the wireless interface compliant with an IEEE 802.11 standard; and

a software process operative to be executed on said data processing apparatus, said software process comprising a plurality of instructions which are configured to, when executed, assemble and transmit a communication comprising at least a portion of said data, the transmission

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being conducted via at least the wireless interface to a computerized apparatus having a complementary wireless interface compliant with the IEEE 802.11 standard, the computerized apparatus disposed within the wireless range of the wireless interface of the portable computerized device, the computerized apparatus configured to, responsive to receipt of said communication, cause at least a portion of the data to be transmitted to a remote entity via a network interface of the computerized apparatus to cause a shipment by a third party of one or more items similar or identical to said consumable item from a second location to the first location in order to replenish at least said consumable item.

21. The computerized device of claim 20, wherein said transmission to a remote entity via a network interface of the computerized apparatus comprises transmission of a communication addressed to an internet universal resource locator (URL) associated with a network server, the server configured to substantially automatically cause said shipment.

22. The computerized device of claim 20, wherein said portable computerized device comprises a mechanical button apparatus in signal communication with the data processing apparatus, the computerized device configured to, when the button apparatus is depressed by the user, cause said communication to be automatically sent to the computerized apparatus without further user intervention or input.

23. The computerized device of claim 20, wherein said portable computerized device comprises a one-button transmit functionality such that the computerized device causes said communication to be automatically sent to the computerized apparatus, said communication comprising a pre-formatted electronic message.

24. The computerized device of claim 23, wherein said pre-formatted message is addressed to an Internet universal resource locator (URL) associated with a network server, the server configured to substantially automatically cause said shipment based at least on the at least portion of the data.

25. The computerized device of claim 20, wherein the portable device is configured to employ at least one of (i) physical layer security, and/or (ii) protocol level security, for at least the communication.

26. The computerized device of claim 25, wherein: the portable device is configured to employ both of (i) physical layer security, and/or (ii) protocol level security, for at least the communication; and the physical layer security comprises security provided for an air interface of the wireless interface, and the protocol level security comprises use of a secure sockets layer (SSL) protocol.

27. The computerized device of claim 25, wherein the protocol level security comprises use of a secure sockets layer (SSL) protocol between at least the portable device and a remote server, the server configured to substantially automatically cause said shipment.

28. The computerized device of claim 20, wherein said portable computerized device comprises a one-button transmit functionality such that the computerized device causes said communication to be automatically sent to the computerized apparatus, said communication comprising a pre-formatted electronic message, said pre-formatted message addressed to an Internet universal resource locator (URL) associated with a network server, the server configured to substantially automatically cause said shipment based at least on the at least portion of the data, the computerized device configured to establish a transport level security (TLS) protocol with the server.

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29. A computerized device configured to enable one-touch initiation of a shipping service, the computerized device comprising:

- a data processing apparatus;
- memory in data communication with said data processing apparatus, said memory comprising data indicative of a consumable item used by a user at a first location;
- a wireless interface in data communication with the data processing apparatus and having a range associated therewith, the wireless interface compliant with an IEEE 802.11 standard;
- button apparatus in signal communication with the data processing apparatus; and
- a software process operative to be executed on said data processing apparatus, said software process comprising a plurality of instructions which are configured to, when executed in response to said button apparatus being actuated, automatically assemble and transmit a communication comprising at least a portion of said data indicative of the consumable item, the transmission being conducted via at least the wireless interface to a computerized apparatus, the computerized apparatus having (i) a complementary wireless interface compliant with the IEEE 802.11 standard and (ii) a data interface providing access to an internetwork, the computerized apparatus disposed within the wireless range of the wireless interface of the portable computerized device, the communication addressed to a remote server of the internetwork, the communication configured to automatically cause actions comprising shipment by a transportation and delivery service of one or more items similar or identical to said consumable item from a second location to the first location in order to replenish at least said consumable item.

30. The computerized device of claim 29, wherein the shipment is pursuant to an electronic purchase transaction enabled by a financial institution, the purchase transaction conducted based at least in part on data previously stored in a secure data storage apparatus and accessible by the server.

31. The computerized device of claim 30, wherein said plurality of instructions are further configured to encode user-specific data comprising information that uniquely identifies said user or an account thereof to the server.

32. The computerized device of claim 29, wherein said plurality of instructions are further configured to communicate with an application computer program comprising an e-commerce themed application operative on a mobile smartphone apparatus of the user, the communication with e-commerce themed application comprising transfer of data from the smartphone to the computerized device via the wireless interface of the computerized device, the transferred data relating to at least a user-specific account of the user maintained on the remote server or a server in data communication with the remote server.

33. The computerized device of claim 29, wherein said data interface of said computerized apparatus comprises an OFDM (orthogonal frequency division multiplexed)-based data interface, and the wireless interface of the computerized device comprises an IEEE Std. 802.11 compliant OFDM interface.

34. The computerized device of claim 29, wherein said automatic causation of actions comprising shipment comprises the server causing an electronic message being sent to a storage facility at the second location, the message causing the storage facility to cause the transportation and delivery service to pick up the one or more items at the second location.

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35. The computerized device of claim 29, wherein said plurality of instructions comprises a client portion of a distributed application, the distributed application having a plurality of client portions and at least one server portion, the at least one server portion configured to communicate with each of the plurality of client portions via the Internet and a universal resource locator (URL).

36. The computerized device of claim 29, wherein said plurality of instructions are further configured to communicate with a mobile electronic device via the wireless interface, the communication with a mobile user electronic device causing data enabling the shipment of the one or more items to be transferred from the mobile electronic device to the computerized device via the wireless interface for at least temporary storage on the computerized device.

37. The computerized device of claim 36, wherein the mobile electronic device comprises a cellular-enabled smartphone, and further comprises at least one computer program having at least one e-commerce-themed application computer program configured to run thereon, the at least one e-commerce-themed application computer program having been downloaded to a non-transitory computer-readable apparatus of the smartphone after manufacture of the smartphone, the at least one e-commerce-themed application computer program having been rendered in a Java-based programming language and configured to enable the transfer of the data enabling the shipment of the one or more items to the computerized device.

38. The computerized device of claim 37, wherein said at least one computer program is configured to receive an electronic message comprising information relating to the performance of the shipment, the electronic message comprising the information generated by a remote server acting as a proxy for the transportation and delivery service.

39. The computerized device of claim 38, wherein said information relating to the performance of the shipment comprises: (i) a date and time the shipment is to be performed, (ii) information indicating the first location; and (iii) information indicating a payment method.

40. A portable computerized apparatus, comprising:

a processor apparatus;

memory in data communication with said processor apparatus;

apparatus in data communication with the processor apparatus and configured to obtain bar code information that identifies an item to be shipped to a user of the portable computerized apparatus;

a wireless interface in data communication with the processor apparatus; and

a software process operative to run on said processor apparatus, said software process comprising a plurality of instructions which are configured to, when executed, encode and transmit at least a portion of said bar code information as part of an electronic message, the transmission via the wireless interface to a remote network server;

wherein said electronic message is configured to cause shipment by a third party associated with the network server of said item for said user from a first location to a second location.

41. The portable computerized apparatus of claim 40, wherein the second location comprises at least one of a home or office of the user, information identifying the second location having been previously saved by the user and designated for a destination for the shipment via a user interface generated by the software process on the display device of the portable computerized apparatus.

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42. The portable computerized apparatus of claim 41, wherein the apparatus in data communication with the processor apparatus and configured to obtain the bar code information comprises an apparatus configured to optically obtain the bar code information from a bar code printed on or affixed to an object when the object is placed proximate to the portable computerized apparatus.

43. The portable computerized apparatus of claim 41, wherein the portable computerized apparatus comprises a cellular-enabled smartphone, and the software process further comprises at least one computer program having at least one e-commerce-themed application computer program configured to run thereon, the at least one e-commerce-themed application computer program having been downloaded to a non-transitory computer-readable apparatus of the smartphone after manufacture of the smartphone, the at least one e-commerce-themed application computer program having been rendered in a Java-based programming language and configured to enable at least the encoding of the message comprising the at least portion of the bar code information enabling the shipment of the items.

44. The portable computerized apparatus of claim 43, wherein said third party comprises a transportation and delivery service, and the at least one computer program is configured to receive an electronic message comprising information relating to the performance of the shipment, the electronic message comprising the information generated by a remote server acting as a proxy for the transportation and delivery service; and

wherein said information relating to the performance of the shipment comprises: (i) a date and time the shipment is to be performed, (ii) information indicating the first location; and (iii) information indicating a payment method.

45. The portable computerized apparatus of claim 43, further comprising a user interface capable of receipt of a user's speech, said user's speech comprising at least information that identifies an item, said portable computerized apparatus further configured to cause conversion of the received user's speech into a digital representation thereof and recognition of the information that identifies an item.

46. The portable computerized apparatus of claim 43, further comprising a capacitive touch screen interface in data communication with the processor apparatus and configured to display at least one soft function key, said at least one soft function key causing, when activated by said user, said transmission of said message without further user intervention, said transmission comprising transmission to a universal resource locator (URL) supplied by the e-commerce-themed application computer program, said URL associated with or controlled by a second party server acting as a proxy or agent for the third party, the third party delivering the item to the second location as part of the shipment.

47. The portable computerized apparatus of claim 46, wherein said wireless interface comprises an OFDM (orthogonal frequency division multiplexed)-based data interface, and the portable computerized apparatus further comprises a Wi-Fi (IEEE Std. 802.11) compliant OFDM interface in data communication with the processor apparatus; and

wherein the at least one program is configured to enable transmission of the message over either the wireless interface or the Wi-Fi compliant interface.

48. Non-transitory computer readable storage apparatus configured for use in an electronic apparatus, the electronic apparatus comprising:

digital processor apparatus;

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a capacitive touch screen input and display device in data communication with the digital processor apparatus;

a first radio frequency interface in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, the first radio interface comprising a cellular interface;

a second radio frequency interface in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, the second radio interface comprising an interface compliant with an IEEE 802.11 Standard; and

bar code reader apparatus in data communication with the digital processor apparatus and configured to generate data related to a bar-coded item placed proximate to the reader apparatus;

wherein the non-transitory computer readable storage apparatus is in data communication with said digital processor apparatus and comprises at least one computer program stored therein, the at least one computer program operative to run on said digital processor apparatus, said at least one computer program comprising a plurality of instructions which are configured to, when executed on the digital processor apparatus:

generate a user interface element via the capacitive touch screen input and display device, the user interface element configured to receive, via the capacitive touch screen input and display device, a selection relating to delivery of the bar-coded item from a user of the electronic device, and generate at least one signal relating to said selection;

based at least on the at least one signal, substantially automatically encode a first message to an internet network server, said message configured to cause provision by a third party of said delivery of said bar-coded item, said message being based at least on said data related to said bar-coded item and being uniquely associated with a user account of the user, the user account maintained on the server; and

cause wireless transmission of the first message to the server at least via at least one of the first radio frequency interface or the second radio interface;

wherein the at least one computer program enables the user to cause provision of the delivery at a location previously specified by the user without the user having to either: (i) re-enter data relating to the previously specified location, or (ii) manually enter data relating to the bar-coded item.

49. The non-transitory computer readable storage apparatus of claim **48**, wherein:

the first radio frequency interface comprises a wireless interface utilizing an OFDM (orthogonal frequency division multiplexed) protocol;

the at least one computer program is further configured to utilize at least one of a transport level security (TLS) or secure sockets layer (SSL) protocol for at least transmission of the message to the server.

50. The non-transitory computer readable storage apparatus of claim **48**, wherein the electronic apparatus comprises a cellular-enabled smartphone, and the at least one computer program comprises an e-commerce-themed application computer program, the at least one e-commerce-themed application computer program having been downloaded to the non-transitory computer readable apparatus of the smartphone after manufacture of the smartphone, the at least one e-commerce-themed application computer program having been rendered in a Java-based programming language and configured to enable at least the encoding of the message comprising the at least portion of the data relating to the bar-coded item.

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51. The non-transitory computer-readable storage apparatus of claim **50**, wherein said at least one computer program is further configured to receive an electronic message comprising a plurality of information relating to the performance of the delivery, the plurality of information comprising information indicating: (i) a date and time the service is estimated to be performed, (ii) the location; and (iii) a payment method.

52. A method of adaptively providing substantially automated delivery of one or more items to a user of a type of mobile electronic device, such that the user can utilize a bar-coded item in their possession to enable the delivery to a pre-designated location, the mobile electronic device having a digital processor apparatus, a wireless interface in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, a storage device in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, the storage device capable of storing thereon at least one application computer program, a bar-code reader capable of generating data relating to the identification of the bar-coded item, and an input device and display device each in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, the method comprising:

providing a e-commerce-related application computer program configured for use on at least one mobile electronic device of the type;

subsequent to said providing, conducting an authentication process comprising:

using a network server to authenticate said e-commerce-related application computer program running on a mobile electronic device of the type; and

using said network server to enable authentication of said server by said e-commerce-related application computer program running on the mobile electronic device;

subsequent to said conducting said authentication process, receiving from the mobile electronic device at the network server, one or more electronic messages, the one or more messages collectively comprising at least: (i) information relating to the bar-coded item, the information based at least in part on the data generated by the bar-code reader; and (ii) data uniquely indicative of the user or an account associated therewith, the one or more messages having been generated at least in part by the e-commerce-related application computer program pursuant to the user's desire for the delivery to the pre-designated location;

based at least on the one or more messages, causing provision of the delivery at the pre-designated location by a third party delivery service, the delivery comprising movement of a land-based transportation modality to the pre-designated location;

accessing, based at least on the data uniquely indicative of the user or an account associated therewith, financial payment source data of the user, the accessing the financial payment source data of the user comprising accessing a secure repository of credit card data, the repository in data communication with the network server, the secure repository comprising at least credit card data previously supplied by the user; and

utilizing the financial payment source data to cause payment for the one or more items and the delivery thereof to the pre-designated location.

53. The method of claim **52**, further comprising:

subsequently generating an electronic mail or message to the user, the generated mail or message comprising at least information relating to: (i) a date and time the

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delivery is to be performed, (ii) information relating to the pre-designated location; and (iii) a payment method; and causing transmission of the generated electronic mail or electronic message addressed to the user.

54. The method of claim 53, wherein said conducting an authentication process comprises at least the network server using a challenge-based approach utilizing at least one RAND (random) value.

55. A method of adaptively providing delivery of one or more desired items to a user of a type of cellular-enabled smartphone, such that the user does not need to either: (i) re-enter an address for where the delivery is to be rendered, or (ii) manually enter data or information identifying the one or more desired items, the cellular-enabled smartphone comprising a digital processor apparatus, an OFDM (orthogonal frequency division multiplexing)-based wireless interface in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, a storage device in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, the storage device capable of storing thereon at least one application computer program, apparatus in data communication with the digital processor apparatus and capable of reading a barcode on an item, and a capacitive touch-screen input device and display device each in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, the method comprising:

providing a e-commerce-themed application computer program configured for use on at least one cellular-enabled smartphone of the type;

establishing a data communications session between a network server apparatus and the e-commerce-themed application computer program operative on the cellular-enabled smartphone of the user, the communications session utilizing at least the wireless interface and an interposed internetwork for communication of data;

at a later time, receiving from the cellular-enabled smartphone of the user, and at the network server apparatus, one or more electronic messages, the one or more messages having been transmitted via at least the wireless interface, at least one of the one or more messages comprising information relating to: (i) the one or more desired items, the information based at least in part on data generated by the apparatus capable of reading a barcode, and (ii) a previously entered delivery location having been affirmatively selected by the user via a touch on a touch-sensitive screen of the input device, the one or more messages having been generated at least in part by the e-commerce-themed application computer program, at least a portion of the one or more electronic messages having been secured according to a transport-layer or protocol-layer security process associated with at least the session;

based at least on the one or more messages, enabling delivery of the one or more desired items at the location by a third party transport service, the delivery comprising movement of a land-based transport modality of the third party transport service to the location and being based on data indicative of the location forwarded from the server to the third party service in a substantially automated fashion via one or more electronic messages from the server to the third party service;

accessing credit card-related data previously supplied by the user and designated by the user as a payment source to cause payment for at least the one or more items;

generating an electronic mail or electronic message to the user, the generated mail or message comprising infor-

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mation relating to at least an estimated time of completion of the delivery, the location, and the payment source; and

causing transmission of the generated electronic mail or electronic message to the user.

56. The method of claim 55, wherein the smartphone further comprises a radio frequency-based positioning apparatus capable of generating location data, and the previously entered delivery location affirmatively selected by the user via a touch on a touch-sensitive screen of the input device is selected according to the method comprising:

obtaining location data relating to a then-current location of the smartphone from the positioning apparatus; and designating an address associated with the then-current location as the delivery location.

57. Apparatus configured for adaptively providing item delivery for respective ones of a plurality of users of respective cellular-enabled smartphones from a substantially centralized location, such that none of the plurality of users need to either: (i) manually enter any textual or numeric data relating to an identity of a desired item, or (ii) need make a voice call or other voice-based communication to obtain the delivery of the desired item, the cellular-enabled smartphones each comprising a digital processor apparatus, a wireless interface in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, a storage device in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, the storage device capable of storing thereon at least one application computer program, a bar-code recognition apparatus capable of generating data relating to the identity of the desired item, and an input device and display device each in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, the apparatus comprising:

a network server apparatus in data communication with a data internetwork, the network server apparatus comprising a server portion of a client-server computer program, the server portion configured to execute on the server apparatus and communicate via at least the data internetwork with a plurality of client portions disposed on respective ones of the cellular-enabled smartphones and operative to execute on the respective digital processor apparatus thereof; and

a plurality of client portions of the client-server computer program, the client portions disposed on the respective ones of the cellular-enabled smartphones, the client portions each comprising an e-commerce-themed application computer program written at least partly in a Java programming language;

wherein the server portion and the client portions are, as applicable, configured to, when executed:

establish a plurality of respective data communications sessions between the network server apparatus and respective ones of the e-commerce-themed application computer programs operative on the cellular-enabled smartphones of the respective plurality of users, the communications sessions each utilizing at least the respective smartphone's wireless interface, and the data internetwork for communication of data;

at respective ones of later times, transmit from the respective cellular-enabled smartphones, and receive at the network server apparatus, one or more electronic messages, the one or more messages transmitted via at least the respective smartphone's wireless interface, at least one of the one or more messages comprising information relating to respective desired item to be delivered to the respective users, the information based at least in part on the identity data generated by the bar code recognition apparatus of that

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smartphone, the desired item having been affirmatively selected by the respective user of that smartphone for delivery for the respective user via the respective input device, the one or more messages having been generated at least in part by the e-commerce-themed application computer program of that smartphone, at least a portion of the one or more electronic messages having been secured according to a protocol-layer security process associated with at least the session associated with that smartphone;

based at least on the one or more messages, cause delivery of the respective desired item by a third party transport service, the delivery comprising movement of a land-based transport modality of the third party transport service to a user-designated location, the causation of delivery enabled by the network server apparatus;

access credit card-related data previously supplied by the respective user and designated by the respective user as a payment source to cause payment for at least the respective delivery;

generate a respective one of an electronic mail or electronic message to the respective user, the generated mail or message comprising at least: (i) a date and time the respective delivery is estimated to occur, (ii) the user-designated location; and (iii) the respective payment source; and

cause transmission of the generated respective electronic mail or electronic message to the respective user.

58. A method of dynamically providing delivery of one or more items to a user of an electronic device, the user being able to automatically identify of the one or more items using the electronic device, the electronic device having a digital processor apparatus, a wireless interface in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, a storage device in data communication with the digital processor apparatus and having at least application computer program disposed thereon, the at least one application program having been rendered using an object-oriented programming language and configured to be executed on at least the digital processor apparatus and comprising an e-commerce-based theme; a bar code data recognition apparatus in data communication with the digital processor apparatus and capable of generating data relating to the one or more items, and a capacitive touch screen input and display device in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, the method comprising:

receiving via the at least one application computer program:

the generated data relating to the one or more items;

a user selection of a desired delivery location for the one or more items, the input provided via the capacitive touch screen input and display device; and

a user selection of a desired payment source for the one or more items, the input provided via the capacitive touch screen input and display device;

based at least on the receiving of the selections, generating one or more electronic messages for transmission via an internetwork to a network server apparatus in data communication therewith, the one or more electronic messages comprising at least: (i) the generated data relating to the one or more items; (ii) data uniquely indicative of the user or an account associated therewith; (iii) data indicative of the desired delivery location; and (iv) data indicative of the desired payment source;

causing transmission of the one or more messages from the electronic device to the network server apparatus via at

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least the wireless interface and an interposed internetwork using a protocol-level session established between at least the electronic device and the network server apparatus, the transmission of the one or more messages substantially automatically instigating provision of the one or more items at the desired location by a third party transportation service;

wherein said transmission of the one or more messages from the electronic device to the network server apparatus via at least the wireless interface comprises transmission via a plurality of radio frequency carriers, and via a plurality of different time periods, so as to at least mitigate interference with other radio frequency communications devices within the same frequency band.

59. The method of claim **58**, wherein said transmission via a plurality of radio frequency carrier frequencies comprises modulating data onto at least a portion of said radio frequency carriers using binary phase shift keying (BPSK) modulation.

60. A method utilized by a network proxy agent for one or more third-party transportation service providers, the method to cause provision of a transportation-related service for a user of a mobile electronic device, the mobile electronic device having a digital processor apparatus, an OFDM-based wireless interface in data communication with the digital processor apparatus and configured to transmit via a plurality of radio frequency carriers, and via a plurality of different time periods, so as to at least mitigate interference with other radio frequency communications devices within the same frequency band, a storage device in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, the storage device capable of storing thereon at least one application computer program, a bar code reading apparatus capable of generating data indicative of an identity of an item, and a touch-screen input device and display device each in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, the method enabling the user to obtain the transportation-related service without manual entry via the input device of either data identifying the item or a destination, the method comprising:

receiving from the mobile electronic device, via a previously established communications session between the proxy agent and the mobile electronic device, one or more electronic messages, the one or more messages collectively comprising at least: (i) the data indicative of the identity of the item; (ii) data indicative of the destination, the data indicative of the destination being based on a user selection via the touch-screen input device of a soft-function key or icon relating to a previously provided destination; and (iii) data uniquely indicative of the user or an account associated with the user, the one or more messages having been generated at least in part by an e-commerce-themed application computer program operative on the mobile electronic device, the one or more messages configured for transmission to the proxy agent and being generated in response to an input of the user received via the touch-screen input device;

using the proxy agent to, based at least on the one or more received messages, facilitate provision of the transportation-related service at the destination by one of the one or more third-party transportation service providers, the transportation-related service comprising movement of a land-based transportation modality of the one service provider to the destination in order to deliver the item to the user; and

using the proxy agent to cause generation and transmission to the user of an electronic message comprising at least one of an estimated date or an estimated time of provision of the transportation-related service to the user.

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61. The method of claim 60, further comprising enabling, via at least the proxy agent, establishment of a secure sockets layer (SSL) connection between at least the mobile electronic device and the network server apparatus for transmission of the received one or more messages and the electronic message comprising an estimated time of provision, the session utilizing the connection;

wherein the e-commerce-themed application computer program comprises a computer program rendered at least in part using a Java-based programming language, and the method further comprises causing, from the proxy agent, the e-commerce-themed application computer program to instantiate a display element or window on the display device, the display element or window prompting the user for an input relating to the transport-related service, the input required before the item can be delivered at the destination; and

wherein the method further comprises:

using the proxy agent for accessing, based at least one the data uniquely indicative of the user or an account associated with the user, account data of the user, the access of the account data of the user comprising accessing a secure repository of user data, the repository in data communication with the proxy agent, the secure repository comprising at least data previously supplied by the user for storage therein; and

utilizing the accessed data to verify that the user is authorized for provision of the transportation-related service by one of the third-party providers.

62. A portable computerized apparatus configured for causing substantially automated delivery of an item from a pre-designated location, the apparatus comprising:

a processor;

memory in data communication with said processor;

bar code recognition apparatus in data communication with the processor and configured to generate data that identifies an item to be shipped to a user;

speech processing apparatus configured to at least digitize speech of the user, the speech comprising one or more words indicative of the item, the speech processing apparatus further configured to cause recognition of the one or more words within the digitized speech;

an IEEE Std. 802.11-compliant wireless interface in data communication with the processor and having a range associated therewith; and

a software process operative to run on said processor, said software process comprising a plurality of instructions which are configured to, when executed, encode and transmit at least a portion of at least one of (i) said data that identifies the item, and/or (ii) data indicative of the recognized one or more words, the transmission configured to occur via the wireless interface to a computerized system, the computerized system disposed within the wireless range of the wireless interface, said computerized system configured to provide said at least portion of said at least one of (i) said data that identifies the item, and/or (ii) data indicative of the recognized one or more words, to a remote server entity via a network interface of the computerized system;

wherein said provision of said at least one of (i) said data that identifies the item, and/or

(ii) data indicative of the recognized one or more words, to the remote server entity is configured to cause a delivery by a third party of said item for said user at the pre-designated location.

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63. The computerized apparatus of claim 62, wherein:

said plurality of instructions are further configured to communicate with a mobile electronic device via the wireless interface, the communication with a mobile user electronic device causing data enabling the delivery of the item to be transferred from the mobile electronic device to the computerized apparatus via the wireless interface for at least temporary storage on the computerized apparatus;

the mobile electronic device comprises a cellular-enabled smartphone, and further comprises at least one computer program having at least one e-commerce-themed application computer program configured to run thereon, the at least one e-commerce-themed application computer program having been downloaded to a non-transitory computer-readable apparatus of the smartphone after manufacture of the smartphone, the at least one e-commerce-themed application computer program having been rendered at least in part in a Java-based programming language and configured to enable the transfer of the data enabling the delivery of the item to the computerized apparatus; and

said at least one computer program is configured to receive an electronic message comprising information relating to the performance of the delivery, the electronic message comprising the information generated by a remote server acting as a proxy for the transportation and delivery service.

64. Network apparatus configured for adaptively providing item delivery for respective ones of a plurality of users of respective wireless-enabled devices from a substantially centralized location, such that the plurality of users need only manually depress a button means of the respective wireless enabled device a single time to substantially automatically obtain the delivery of the desired item, the wireless-enabled devices each comprising a digital processor apparatus, a wireless interface in data communication with the digital processor apparatus and compliant with an IEEE 802.11 Standard, a storage device in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, the storage device capable of storing data relating to the identity of the desired item, and at least one computer program operative to run on the digital processor apparatus, the network apparatus comprising:

a network server means in data communication with a data internetwork, the network server means comprising a server computer program means, the server computer program means configured to execute on the server means and communicate via at least the data internetwork with the at least one computer program of respective ones of the wireless-enabled devices in order to receive, at respective ones of later times, one or more electronic messages transmitted from the respective wireless-enabled devices, the one or more messages transmitted via at least the respective device's wireless interface and in response to said single manual depression of said button means, at least one of the one or more messages comprising information relating to the respective desired item to be delivered to the respective users, the information based at least in part on the respective data related to the identity of the desired item, the one or more messages having been generated at least in part by the at least one computer program of that wireless-enabled device, at least a portion of the one or more electronic messages having been secured according to a protocol-layer security process associated with at least one of the wireless-enabled device and the network server means;

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wherein the network server means is further configured to, based at least on the one or more messages:

cause delivery of the respective desired item by a transport service, the delivery comprising movement of a land-based transport modality of the transport service to a user-designated location;

access credit card-related data previously supplied by the respective user and designated by the respective user as a payment source to cause payment for at least the respective delivery;

generate a respective one of an electronic mail or electronic message to the respective user, the generated mail or message comprising at least two of: (i) a date and time the respective delivery is estimated to occur, (ii) the user-designated location; and/or (iii) the respective payment source; and

cause transmission of the generated respective electronic mail or electronic message to the respective user.

65. The network apparatus of claim **64**, wherein:

said server computer program means further configured to communicate with respective ones of mobile electronic devices of the respective users, the mobile user electronic devices each comprising at least one computer program having at least one e-commerce-themed application computer program configured to run thereon, the at least one e-commerce-themed application computer program having been downloaded to a non-transitory computer-readable apparatus of each of the mobile devices after manufacture thereof, the at least one e-commerce-themed application computer program having been rendered at least in part in a Java-based programming language and configured to enable the transfer of the data enabling the delivery of the item to the from the respective mobile electronic device to a corresponding wireless-enabled device.

66. A computerized apparatus, comprising:

a digital processor apparatus;

memory in data communication with said digital processor apparatus;

computerized logic in data communication with the digital processor apparatus and configured to receive information that enables an item identified by a user to be shipped, the computerized logic comprising a user interface capable of receipt of a user's speech, said user's speech comprising at least a portion of the information that enables the shipment including the identification of the item, said computerized apparatus further configured to cause conversion of the received user's speech into a digital representation thereof;

a first wireless interface in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, the first wireless interface compliant with at least one IEEE 802.11 standard;

a second wireless interface in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, the second wireless interface compliant with at least one Bluetooth standard; and

a software process operative to run on said digital processor apparatus, said software process comprising a plurality of instructions which are configured to, when executed, encode and transmit at least a portion of said digital representation, the transmission via the first wireless interface to a computerized system, the computerized system disposed within a wireless range of the first wireless interface;

wherein said at least portion of said digital representation enables the shipment of the item for the user by a third party, the shipment being from a first location to a second location.

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67. The computerized apparatus of claim **66**, wherein said computerized system is configured to utilize said at least portion of said digital representation to form a communication to be sent to a remote entity via at least a network interface of the computerized system, the remote entity configured to cause said shipment based at least on said at least portion of said digital representation.

68. The computerized apparatus of claim **67**, wherein:

the selection occurs at a then-current location of the user; and

said shipment by a third party of said item for said user from a first location to a second location comprises a shipment from the first location to the then-current location, the then-current location determined based on a previous user entry thereof via the computerized apparatus.

69. The computerized apparatus of claim **68**, wherein the previous user entry via the computerized apparatus comprises the user saving a location determined by a positioning system of the computerized apparatus.

70. The computerized apparatus of claim **69**, wherein the positioning system of the computerized apparatus comprises a radio-frequency based satellite positioning system.

71. The computerized apparatus of claim **67**, wherein:

the selection occurs at a then-current location of the user; and

said shipment by a third party of said item for said user from a first location to a second location comprises a shipment from the first location to the then-current location, the then-current location determined based on a previous user entry stored in a network-based account associated with the user.

72. The computerized apparatus of claim **68**, wherein the digital representation comprises a digital representation of one or more words within the received user's speech.

73. The computerized apparatus of claim **68**, wherein the communication to be sent to a remote entity via at least a network interface of the computerized system comprises a communication formatted at least in part according to an Internet Protocol (IP), at least the formatting according to the IP enabling transmission of the communication over an untrusted internetwork.

74. The computerized apparatus of claim **67**, wherein the second location comprises a previously stored location entered by the user and stored in a network database in data communication with the remote network and associated specifically with the user, the previously stored location comprises a location associated with the user's home or office.

75. The computerized apparatus of claim **74**, wherein the network interface of the computerized system comprises a DOCSIS-compliant cable modem, the cable modem in data communication with a managed hybrid-fiber coax (HFC) network of a service provider.

76. The computerized apparatus of claim **74**, wherein the computerized system comprises a cellular-enabled smartphone of the user, and the network interface of the computerized system comprises a cellular modem.

77. The computerized apparatus of claim **74**, wherein the first wireless interface comprises an OFDM (orthogonal frequency division multiplexed)-based data interface.

78. The computerized apparatus of claim **66**, wherein the interface compliant with at least one Bluetooth standard comprises an interface having at least one Bluetooth profile, the at least one profile enabling data transfer from a Bluetooth-enabled mobile device paired with the interface.

79. The computerized apparatus of claim **78**, wherein the Bluetooth-enabled mobile device paired with the interface

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comprises an application computer program having at least one theme, the at least one theme comprising at least one of an Internet access or e-commerce theme, the application computer program rendered in a Java-based computer programming language, the application computer program configured to be downloaded to the mobile device.

80. The computerized apparatus of claim **79**, wherein: the at least one Bluetooth profile comprises at least one of (i) a profile enabling data “pull”, and/or (ii) a profile enabling data “push”; and the data transfer comprises at least one of a data pull or data push, the data transferred at least in part enabling the shipment.

81. The computerized apparatus of claim **80**, wherein the computerized apparatus is further configured to include at least a portion of data transferred via the at least one of the data push or data pull in one or more messages transmitted to the third party.

82. The computerized apparatus of claim **80**, wherein the at least one of (i) a profile enabling data “pull”, and/or (ii) a profile enabling data “push” comprises an OBEX (object exchange) protocol.

83. The computerized apparatus of claim **82**, wherein the OBEX (object exchange) protocol comprises a handshake protocol, the handshake protocol enabling communication of data objects between the mobile device and the computerized apparatus.

84. The computerized apparatus of claim **80**, wherein the data transferred at least in part enabling the shipment comprises an address.

85. The computerized apparatus of claim **66**, wherein the shipment comprises the third party accessing a previously established financial account of the user, and the computerized apparatus is configured to cause utilization of user-specific biometric data as part of said enablement of said shipment.

86. The computerized apparatus of claim **85**, wherein the user-specific biometric data comprises voice data.

87. The computerized apparatus of claim **86**, wherein the voice data comprises previously recorded voice data of the user, and the utilization of previously recorded speech of the user as part of said enablement of said shipment comprises utilization of the previously recorded voice data to authenticate the user.

88. A computerized apparatus, comprising:
a digital processor apparatus;
memory in data communication with said digital processor apparatus;
a first wireless interface in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, the first wireless interface utilizing an air interface operating according to orthogonal frequency division multiplexing (OFDM) in an unlicensed frequency band;
a second wireless interface in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, the second wireless interface compliant with at least one Bluetooth standard; and
a software process operative to run on said digital processor apparatus, said software process comprising a plurality of instructions which are configured to, when executed:

receive a user’s speech, said user’s speech comprising information that enables at least: (i) shipment of one or more items by a third party, the shipment being from a first location to a second location, the second location having been previously designated by the user and transmitted to the third party via a network;

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and (ii) access by the third party or its proxy of a remote financial account of the user for payment of at least the shipment;

convert the received user’s speech into digital data;
encode at least one message comprising at least a portion of said digital data; and

transmit, via the first wireless interface, the encoded at least one message, the transmission being to a computerized wireless base station disposed within a wireless range of the first wireless interface, the wireless base station in data communication with a remote network entity via an untrusted internetwork and a wireline network interface of an internetwork service provider to the internetwork, the at least one message formatted at least in part according to an Internet Protocol (IP), at least the formatting according to the IP enabling transmission of the communication over the untrusted internetwork.

89. The apparatus of claim **88**, wherein the transmission of the at least one message comprises transmission over at least the Internet using a secure session protocol, the protocol comprising at least one exchange of cryptographic information.

90. The apparatus of claim **89**, wherein the transmission further comprises creation of a secure session via at least the secure session protocol, the secure session established by a single action of the user.

91. The apparatus of claim **89**, wherein the secure session protocol comprises a transport layer security (TLS) protocol.

92. The apparatus of claim **89**, wherein the secure session protocol comprises a secure sockets layer security (SSL) protocol.

93. The computerized apparatus of claim **88**, wherein:

the second wireless interface comprises at least one Bluetooth profile, the at least one profile enabling data transfer from a Bluetooth-enabled mobile device paired with the second wireless interface, the Bluetooth-enabled mobile device comprising an application computer program having at least one theme, the at least one theme comprising at least one of an Internet access or e-commerce theme, the application computer program rendered in a Java-based computer programming language, the application computer program configured to be downloaded to the mobile device;

the at least one Bluetooth profile comprises at least one of (i) a profile enabling data “pull”, and/or (ii) a profile enabling data “push”; and the data transfer comprises at least one of a data pull or data push via at least one of the profiles (i) or (ii), the data transferred at least in part enabling the shipment.

94. The computerized apparatus of claim **93**, wherein the computerized apparatus is further configured to include at least a portion of data transferred via the at least one of the data push or data pull in one or more messages transmitted to the third party.

95. The computerized apparatus of claim **93**, wherein the at least one of (i) a profile enabling data “pull”, and/or (ii) a profile enabling data “push” comprises an OBEX (object exchange) protocol, the OBEX (object exchange) protocol comprises a handshake protocol, the handshake protocol enabling communication of data objects between the mobile device and the computerized apparatus.

96. The computerized apparatus of claim **93**, wherein the data transferred at least in part enabling the shipment comprises an address.

97. The computerized apparatus of claim **93**, wherein the computerized apparatus is configured to cause utilization of

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previously recorded and user-specific voice data as part of said enablement of said shipment.

98. The computerized apparatus of claim **88**, wherein the computerized apparatus is configured to cause utilization of previously recorded and user-specific voice data as part of said enablement of said shipment.

99. A computerized apparatus, comprising:

a digital processor apparatus;

memory in data communication with said digital processor apparatus;

a first wireless interface in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, the first wireless interface compliant with at least one IEEE 802.11 standard;

a second wireless interface in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, the second wireless interface compliant with at least one Bluetooth standard; and at least one software process operative to run on said digital processor apparatus, said at least one software process comprising a plurality of instructions which are configured to, when executed:

receive a user's speech, said user's speech comprising information that enables on-demand provision of digital data by a content delivery service provider to the computerized apparatus, the digital data comprising a digital rendering of music;

convert the received user's speech into a digital format; encode at least one message comprising at least a portion of said digital formatted speech; and

transmit, via the first wireless interface, the encoded at least one message, the transmission being to a computerized wireless base station disposed within a wireless range of the first wireless interface, the wireless base station capable of data communication with a remote network entity of the content delivery service provider via at least a service provider wireline interface and an untrusted internetwork;

wherein the at least one message is transmitted via a communications session established between the computerized apparatus and the remote network entity.

100. The apparatus of claim **99**, wherein the on-demand provision comprises download of the digital rendering of music as one or more data files.

101. The apparatus of claim **100**, wherein the one or more data files comprise one or more Motion Picture Experts Group Audio (MP3) files.

102. The apparatus of claim **99**, wherein the on-demand provision comprises streaming of the digital rendering of music.

103. The apparatus of claim **102**, wherein the streamed digital rendering of music comprises one or more streamed Motion Picture Experts Group Audio (MP3) files.

104. The apparatus of claim **102**, wherein the streamed music data comprises music data rendered in a lossy compression format.

105. The apparatus of claim **99**, wherein the plurality of instructions of the at least one software process is further configured to, when executed, utilize the digital formatted speech to identify one or more words within the received user's speech, and the encode of at least one message comprising at least a portion of said digital formatted speech comprises an encode of at least one message comprising the identified one or more words.

106. The apparatus of claim **99**, wherein the communications session comprises a secure session established according to a secure session protocol, the secure session protocol

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comprising exchange of cryptographic data between the computerized apparatus and the remote network entity.

107. The apparatus of claim **106**, wherein the secure session protocol comprises a transport layer security (TLS) protocol.

108. The apparatus of claim **106**, wherein the secure session protocol comprises a secure sockets layer security (SSL) protocol.

109. The apparatus of claim **99**, wherein:

the interface compliant with at least one Bluetooth standard comprises an interface having at least one Bluetooth profile, the at least one profile enabling data transfer from a Bluetooth-enabled mobile device paired with the second interface;

the Bluetooth-enabled mobile device paired with the interface comprises an application computer program having at least one theme, the at least one theme comprising an entertainment theme, the application computer program rendered in a Java-based computer programming language, the application computer program configured to be downloaded to the mobile device.

110. The apparatus of claim **109**, wherein the computerized apparatus is further configured to include at least a portion of data transferred in one or more messages transmitted to the third party.

111. A computerized apparatus, comprising:

a digital processor apparatus;

memory in data communication with said digital processor apparatus;

a first wireless interface in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, the first wireless interface utilizing an air interface operating according to orthogonal frequency division multiplexing (OFDM) in an unlicensed frequency band; and

a software process operative to run on said digital processor apparatus, said software process comprising a plurality of instructions which are configured to, when executed:

receive a user's speech, said user's speech comprising information that enables at least: (i) movement by a third party from one location to a second location so as to provide a transport service for the user, the provision of the transport service enabled by an electronic network proxy for the third party; and (ii) access by the electronic network proxy of a financial account of the user for payment of at least the transport service; convert the received user's speech into digital data; encode at least one message comprising at least a portion of said digital data; and

transmit, via the first wireless interface, the encoded at least one message, the transmission being to a computerized wireless base station disposed within a wireless range of the first wireless interface, the wireless base station in data communication with a remote network entity via an untrusted internetwork and a wireline network interface to the internetwork, the at least one message formatted at least in part according to an Internet Protocol (IP), at least the formatting according to the IP enabling transmission of the communication over the untrusted internetwork;

wherein the at least one message is transmitted via a communications session established between the computerized apparatus and the electronic network proxy.

112. The apparatus of claim **111**, wherein the second location comprises a location previously designated by the user and saved via the computerized apparatus.

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113. The apparatus of claim 112, wherein the location previously designated by the user and saved via the computerized apparatus comprises a location determined at least in part based on Assisted Global Positioning System (A-GPS) data.

114. The apparatus of claim 113, further comprising a second wireless interface in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, the second wireless interface compliant with at least one Bluetooth standard, the second interface compliant with at least one Bluetooth standard comprises at least one Bluetooth profile, the at least one profile enabling data transfer from a Bluetooth-enabled mobile device paired with the second interface;

wherein:

the Bluetooth-enabled mobile device paired with the second interface comprises an A-GPS positioning apparatus capable of generating A-GPS data; and

the data transfer from the Bluetooth-enabled mobile device paired with the second interface comprises transfer of the A-GPS data.

115. The apparatus of claim 113, further comprising a second wireless interface in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, the second wireless interface compliant with at least one Bluetooth standard, the second interface compliant with at least one Bluetooth standard comprises at least one Bluetooth profile, the at least one profile enabling data transfer from a Bluetooth-enabled mobile device paired with the second interface;

wherein:

the Bluetooth-enabled mobile device paired with the second interface comprises an A-GPS positioning apparatus capable of generating A-GPS data; and

the data transfer from the Bluetooth-enabled mobile device paired with the second interface comprises transfer of data relating to the location determined at least in part based on Assisted Global Positioning System (A-GPS) data.

116. The apparatus of claim 115, wherein the at least one Bluetooth profile comprises at least one of (i) a profile enabling data "pull", and/or (ii) a profile enabling data "push"; and

the transfer of data relating to the location determined comprises at least one of a data pull or data push via at least one of the profiles (i) or (ii).

117. The apparatus of claim 116, wherein the at least one of (i) a profile enabling data "pull", and/or (ii) a profile enabling data "push" comprises an OBEX (object exchange) protocol, the OBEX (object exchange) protocol comprises a handshake protocol, the handshake protocol enabling communication of data objects between the mobile device and the computerized apparatus.

118. The apparatus of claim 111, further comprising dynamic text to speech (TTS) apparatus in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, and the computerized apparatus is further configured to:

receive an electronic message comprising an estimated time of provision of the transport service, the message transmitted by the electronic network proxy, the electronic message having been automatically generated by the electronic network proxy; and

convert, using at least the TTS apparatus, at least a portion of the received electronic message to an audible representation for the user to hear.

119. The apparatus of claim 111, wherein the transport service comprises delivery of a chattel to the second location by the third party, the second location comprising the user's home.

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120. Network apparatus configured for adaptively providing a chattel delivery service for respective ones of a plurality of users of respective computerized client apparatus from a substantially centralized location and without the users having to interface with a live human being, the computerized apparatus each comprising a digital processor apparatus, a wireless interface in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, a storage device in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, the storage device capable of storing thereon at least one computer program, and a speech processing apparatus in data communication with the digital processor apparatus the speech processing apparatus configured to convert the user's speech into digital data, the network apparatus comprising:

a network server apparatus in data communication with a data internetwork, the network server apparatus comprising at least one server portion of a client-server computer program, the at least one server portion configured to execute on the server apparatus and communicate via at least the data internetwork with a plurality of client portions disposed on respective ones of the computerized apparatus and operative to execute on the respective digital processor apparatus thereof;

wherein the at least one server portion is configured to, when executed:

enable establishment of a plurality of respective data communications sessions between the network server apparatus and respective ones of the computerized apparatus of the respective plurality of users, the communications sessions each utilizing at least the respective computerized apparatus' wireless interface, and the data internetwork, for communication of data;

at respective ones of later times, receive at the network server apparatus, one or more electronic messages, the one or more messages transmitted via at least the respective computerized apparatus' wireless interface, at least one of the one or more messages comprising information relating to a desired chattel delivery service, the information relating to a desired chattel delivery service comprising at least a portion of digital data generated by the speech processing apparatus of the respective computerized apparatus in response to a user speech input;

based at least on the received one or more messages, cause provision of the respective desired chattel delivery service at least at a respective one of a previously designated location by a respective third party transport service, the delivery service rendered by respective third party transport service comprising movement of a land-based transport modality of the third party transport service to the respective designated location to deliver the chattel, the causation of provision enabled by the network server apparatus;

access credit card-related data previously supplied by the respective user and designated by the respective user as a payment source to cause payment for at least the respective delivery service, the previously supplied credit-related data stored in a database in data communication with the server apparatus and associated with a previously established account of the user; subsequently automatically generate a respective one of an electronic mail or electronic message to the user, the generated mail or message comprising at least: (i) the respective designated location; (ii) an estimated delivery time or date for the chattel; and (iii) the respective payment source; and

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cause transmission of the generated respective electronic mail or electronic message to the respective user.

121. The apparatus of claim **120**, wherein the causation of provision based at least on the received one or more mes- 5
sages, comprises use by the server apparatus of the at least portion of the digital data generated by the speech processing apparatus.

122. The apparatus of claim **121**, wherein at least one of the one or more messages comprises data uniquely indicative of 10
the user or an account associated therewith.

123. The apparatus of claim **122**, wherein the communications sessions each comprise secure sessions established according to a transport layer security (TLS) protocol.

124. The apparatus of claim **122**, wherein the communications sessions each comprise secure sessions established according to a secure sockets layer security (SSL) protocol. 15

125. The apparatus of claim **121**, wherein the server apparatus is configured to cause each of the plurality of computerized apparatus to dynamically generate audible speech as 20
part of its respective communication session.

126. The apparatus of claim **121**, wherein the server apparatus is configured to analyze collectively a plurality of the one or more messages received from respective ones of the plurality of computerized apparatus. 25

127. A method for adaptively providing a chattel delivery service for respective ones of a plurality of users of respective computerized client apparatus from a substantially centralized location and without the users having to interface with a live human being, the computerized apparatus each comprising a digital processor apparatus, a wireless interface in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, a storage device in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, the storage device capable of storing thereon at least one computer program, and a speech processing apparatus in data communication with the digital processor apparatus the speech processing apparatus configured to convert the user's speech into digital data, the method comprising:

establishing a plurality of respective secure data communications sessions between a network server apparatus and respective ones of the computerized apparatus of the respective plurality of users, a network server apparatus in data communication with a data internetwork, the network server apparatus comprising at least one server portion of a client-server computer program, the at least one server portion configured to execute on the server apparatus and communicate via at least the data internetwork with a plurality of client portions disposed on respective ones of the computerized apparatus and operative to execute on the respective digital processor apparatus thereof, the communications sessions each utilizing at least the respective computerized apparatus' wireless interface, and the data internetwork, for communication of data, the secure data communications sessions each being established according to at least one of 55
(i) a transport layer security (TLS) protocol; or (ii) a secure sockets layer security (SSL) protocol; at respective ones of later times, receiving at the network server apparatus, one or more electronic messages, the one or more messages transmitted via at least the respective computerized apparatus' wireless interface, at least one of the one or more messages comprising information relating to a desired chattel delivery, the information relating to a desired chattel delivery comprising at least a portion of digital data generated by the speech processing apparatus of the respective computerized apparatus in response to a user speech input, the at least one of the 65

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one or more messages comprises data uniquely indicative of at least one of the user or an account associated therewith;

dynamically generating a plurality of data relating to respective ones of the one or more messages;

causing transmission of the respective dynamically generated data to associated respective ones of the computerized apparatus, the respective dynamically generated data enabling the respective computerized apparatus to generate audible speech;

based at least on the received one or more messages, causing provision of the respective desired chattel delivery at least at a respective one of a previously designated location by a respective third party transport service, the respective delivery by the respective transport service comprising movement of a land-based transport modality of the third party transport service to the respective designated location to deliver the chattel, the causing provision comprising use by the network server apparatus of the at least portion of the digital data generated by the speech processing apparatus;

accessing credit card-related data previously supplied by the respective user and designated by the respective user as a payment source to cause payment for at least the respective desired chattel delivery, the previously supplied credit-related data stored in a database in data communication with the server apparatus and associated with a previously established account of the user;

subsequently automatically generating a respective one of an electronic mail or electronic message to the user, the generated mail or message comprising at least: (i) the respective designated location; (ii) an estimated delivery time or date for the chattel; and (iii) the respective payment source; and

causing transmission of the generated respective electronic mail or electronic message to the respective user.

128. The method of claim **127**, further comprising analyzing collectively a plurality of the one or more messages received from respective ones of the plurality of computerized apparatus.

129. The method of claim **128**, wherein the analyzing collectively comprises identifying chattels of two or more users that can be aggregated into a common shipment in order to reduce costs thereof.

130. A method for adaptively providing a chattel delivery service for respective ones of a plurality of users of respective computerized client apparatus from a substantially centralized location and without the users having to interface with a live human being, and so as to substantially economize on delivery costs, the computerized apparatus each comprising a digital processor apparatus, a wireless interface in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, a storage device in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, the storage device capable of storing thereon at least one computer program, and a speech processing apparatus in data communication with the digital processor apparatus the speech processing apparatus configured to convert the user's speech into digital data, the method comprising:

enabling establishment of a plurality of respective secure data communications sessions between a network server apparatus and respective ones of the computerized apparatus of the respective plurality of users, a network server apparatus in data communication with a data internetwork, the network server apparatus comprising at least one server portion of a client-server computer program, the at least one server portion configured to execute on the server apparatus and communicate via at

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least the data internetwork with a plurality of client portions disposed on respective ones of the computerized apparatus and operative to execute on the respective digital processor apparatus thereof, the communications sessions each utilizing at least the respective computerized apparatus' wireless interface, and the data internetwork, for communication of data, the secure data communications sessions each being established according to at least one of (i) a transport layer security (TLS) protocol; or (ii) a secure sockets layer security (SSL) protocol; at respective ones of later times, receiving at the network server apparatus, one or more electronic messages, the one or more messages transmitted via at least the respective computerized apparatus' wireless interface, at least one of the one or more messages comprising information relating to a desired chattel delivery, the information relating to a desired chattel delivery comprising at least a portion of digital data generated by the speech processing apparatus of the respective computerized apparatus in response to a user speech input, the at least one of the one or more messages comprises data uniquely indicative of at least one of the user or an account associated therewith;

dynamically generating a plurality of data relating to respective ones of the one or more messages;

causing transmission of the respective dynamically generated data to associated respective ones of the computerized apparatus, the respective dynamically generated data enabling the respective computerized apparatus to generate audible speech;

based at least on the received one or more messages, causing provision of the respective desired chattel delivery at least at a respective one of a previously designated location by a respective third party transport service, the respective delivery by the respective transport service comprising movement of a land-based transport modality of the third party transport service to the respective designated location to deliver the chattel, the causing provision comprising the server apparatus:

using the respective at least portion of the digital data generated by the speech processing apparatus to identify respective one or more words therein relating to the respective chattel;

analyzing collectively a plurality of the identified one or more words to identify chattels of two or more of the users that can be aggregated into a common shipment in order to at least reduce a cost of shipping the identified chattels; and

utilizing a common carrier for at least a portion of the desired delivery for the identified chattels; and

accessing credit card-related data previously supplied by the respective user and designated by the respective user as a payment source to cause payment for at least the respective desired chattel delivery, the previously supplied credit-related data stored in a database in data communication with the server apparatus and associated with a previously established account of the respective user.

131. A method for adaptively providing a chattel delivery service for respective ones of a plurality of users of respective computerized client apparatus from a substantially centralized location and without the users having to interface with a live human being, and so as to substantially economize on delivery costs, the computerized apparatus each comprising a digital processor apparatus, a wireless interface in data communication with the digital processor apparatus, a storage device in data communication with the digital processor

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apparatus, the storage device capable of storing thereon at least one computer program, and a speech processing apparatus in data communication with the digital processor apparatus the speech processing apparatus configured to convert the user's speech into digital data, the method comprising:

enabling establishment of a plurality of respective secure data communications sessions between a network server apparatus and respective ones of the computerized apparatus of the respective plurality of users, a network server apparatus in data communication with a data internetwork, the network server apparatus comprising at least one server portion of a client-server computer program, the at least one server portion configured to execute on the server apparatus and communicate via at least the data internetwork with a plurality of client portions disposed on respective ones of the computerized apparatus and operative to execute on the respective digital processor apparatus thereof, the communications sessions each utilizing at least the respective computerized apparatus' wireless interface, and the data internetwork, for communication of data, the secure data communications sessions each being established according to at least one of (i) a transport layer security (TLS) protocol; or (ii) a secure sockets layer security (SSL) protocol;

at respective ones of later times, receiving at the network server apparatus, one or more electronic messages, the one or more messages transmitted via at least the respective computerized apparatus' wireless interface, at least one of the one or more messages comprising information relating to a desired chattel delivery, the information relating to a desired chattel delivery comprising at least a portion of digital data generated by the speech processing apparatus of the respective computerized apparatus in response to a user speech input, the at least one of the one or more messages comprises data uniquely indicative of at least one of the user or an account associated therewith;

dynamically generating a plurality of data relating to respective ones of the one or more messages;

causing transmission of the respective dynamically generated data to associated respective ones of the computerized apparatus, the respective dynamically generated data enabling the respective computerized apparatus to generate audible speech;

based at least on the received one or more messages, causing provision of the respective desired chattel delivery at least at a respective one of a previously designated location by a respective third party transport service, the respective delivery by the respective transport service comprising movement of a land-based transport modality of the third party transport service to the respective designated location to deliver the chattel, the causing provision comprising the server apparatus:

using the respective at least portion of the digital data generated by the speech processing apparatus to identify respective one or more words therein relating to the respective chattel;

analyzing collectively at least a portion of the one or more messages received from two or more users to identify two or more respective desired chattel deliveries that can be aggregated into a shipment to a common distribution point; and

causing shipment of the chattels associated with the identified two or more deliveries to the common distribution point; and

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accessing credit card-related data previously supplied by
the respective user and designated by the respective user
as a payment source to cause payment for at least the
respective desired chattel delivery, the previously supplied credit-related data stored in a database in data 5
communication with the server apparatus and associated
with a previously established account of the respective
user.

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